

ADHYATM RAMAYAN

Condensed



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समर्पण



श्रीमद्भगवतो प्राकुंशाचार्यजी महाराज

Srimate Ramanujay Namah

Preface

Among several versions of *Ramayan*, *Adhyatm Ramayan* (अध्यात्म रामायण) has its own special standing. Its significance can be assessed by the fact that it was recited by *Mahadev* (महादेव) to the sole audience, his consort *Parvati* (पार्वती).

Consolidation of spirituality is its special feature, and accordingly it commences with *Ram Hrudyā* (राम हृदय core knowledge), and almost ends with *Ram Geeta* (राम गीता). In fact the entire legend has been portrayed to illustrate the status of *jeev* (जीव), *jagat* (जगत्), and *paramatma* (परमात्मा). Finally, it helps in self emancipation of an individual through the practice of devotional affection to *Sri Sita Ram* (श्रीसीताराम).

The base source had been the *Sanskrit* version published by Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, India. It is spread over seven *kand*, sixty five *sarg*, and four thousand one hundred eighty *shlok*; their break up is as follows.

<i>Kand</i>	<i>Sarg</i>	<i>Shlok</i>
<i>Bal</i>	7	391
Ayodhya	9	728
Aranya	10	516
Kishkindha	9	506
Sundar	5	426
Yuddh	16	1105
Uttar	9	508
Total	65	4180

The condensed version has been tried to initiate those who are short of time but has curiosity to know the legend.

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Srimate Ramanujaya namah

Glory

The beginning is made by *Sut* (सूत) addressing the sages' gathering. He talks about an incidence when wandering saint Narad arrived in *Brahmalok*. When Narad completed his respectful salutation to Brahma, then Brahma enquired his well being, "Should you have any doubt or enquiry I would try to satisfy you."

Narad mentioned, "I am concerned about the bent of mind of the people on arrival of *kaliyug*. Once the *kaliyug* begins people will have changed mind set. Brahmins will earn knowledge to possess wealth, and would become greedy renouncing their age old responsibility of attending to the welfare of the common mass. Accordingly, other classes of the society *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *shudra* will attempt to encroach into others' realm of duty and responsibility. The main objective of the human society will experience a major shift to materialistic way of life. Possessing wealth, passion for other's wives, ignoring parents, losing temper, disregarding endurance, and disrespecting scriptural provisions shall be quite common. How to improve the situation is my anxiety."

Brahma describing the significance of recitation of *adhyatm ramayan* (अध्यात्म रामायण) spoke to Narad, "Once goddess Parvati enquired the significance of *ram tatv* (राम तत्व) from Mahadev. On her query, Mahadev assured her that *ram tatv* alone is capable of bringing about auspiciousness among masses. All their sins shall be eradicated, once even one alphabet of *ram tatv* is recited with faith. Further elaboration of *ram tatv* is contained in *adhyatm ramayn*."

Mahadev further mentioned, "If someone inscribes *adhyatm ramayan* for others, he conveniently attains the knowledge of *ved*. Its recitation on *ram navami* (राम नवमी), while observing fast achieves those benefits which accrue by liberal charity at *Kurukshetra* and other pilgrimage places, on the occasion of complete sun eclipse. Its rhythmic recitation brings gods at the service of the reciter."

Mahadev disclosed, "*ram hruday* (राम हृदय), and *ram geeta* (राम गीता) are two worth reciting sections of *adhyatm ramayan*. For attaining a given desire fulfilled, three times recitation of *ram hruday* in front of *Hanuman jee* is recommended. If it is recited under a *peepul* (पीपल) tree, or near a basil plant, the severest of sin shall quickly disappear."

Brahma continued with Narad, "The elaboration of significance of *ram geeta* is beyond my capacity. It's known only to Mahadev and Parvati. It's an essence of all *puranic* scriptures, which Ram recited to Lakshman. It is said, once Prashuram had camped with Mahadev for learning the skill to kill Sahasrarjun. He saw Parvati deeply involved in studying *ram geeta*. Prashuram also memorized it completely. Soon he got blessed with the aura of *Narayan*. Its recitation in front of *shaligram*, basil, and *peepul* are capable of securing ram's blessings. It has special significance, if recited on *dwadashi* (12th day of a fortnight) under *agstya* tree, following the fast of *ekadashi* day (11th day of a fortnight).

1. Bal Kand

(7 sarg)

1-1 Ram Hruday (राम हृदय) – the core knowledge (56 / 56)¹

Once Parvati enquired from Mahadev, “What is the reality about Ram? Someone says the he is universal spirit and his life in Ayodhya and beyond is his pastime. While others still hold the view that he didn’t know about himself, and Vashishath enlightened him that he was incarnation of universal spirit. I am surprised when I see him wailing for Sita. If he was really eternal supreme one, why did he do that? And, if he is not that supreme one, then why to chant his glory and carry out faithful devotion to him. Kindly enlighten me.”

Mahadev was pleased to hear her query, and he confirmed, “Ram transcends the entire universe, and is sole supreme entity.” To consolidate his view point he cited one incidence.

‘After his victorious return from Lanka, Ram happened to be once with Sita and Hanuman. Seeing Hanuman standing with folded hands, he asked Sita, “Hanuman is our true devotee. Elaborate on *ram tatv* to him.”

Sita mentioned, “Ram indeed is supreme and eternal entity known by several attributes. I am his potency manifested through the entire creation. He is free from the performances, and on his behalf, I keep on carrying² out the initiation, expansion, and elimination of the entire universe in cyclic order. This all happens because of my close proximity to him for he is my sole refuge. Apparently, all the incidents from Ayodhya to Lanka and thereafter,

‘his birth in *raghukul*, helping Vishwamitr in conducting *ygya*, liberating Ahalya, breaking Shiv’s bow, my wedding, enlightening Prashuram, staying with me for 12 yrs in Ayodhya (1-1-37³), living thereafter in Dandak forest, killing Viradh and illusory deer Marich, abduction of shadow Sita, liberating Jatayu and kabandh, getting honoured by Shabari, forging friendship with Sugriv, killing Vali, searching Sita, bridging sea, laying siege around Lanka, killing Ravan with his kith and kin, crowning Vibhishan, coming to Ayodhya by pushpak with me, and his coronation and many others’

are performed by me, but the ignorant ones, take him as the doer for them.”

Picking up further Ram explained about the nature and attributes of the individual soul (अविच्छिन्नस्य पूर्णेन एकत्वं प्रतिपाद्यते । तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यैश्च साभास्याहमस्तथा ।।) as ‘*tatvamasi*’ (तत्त्वमसि) i.e., ‘*thou art that*’; it is unique, and indestructible . The individual being or soul is eternal, and when his ignorance is eliminated, he enjoys the pleasure of union with the universal

¹ 56 / 56 illustrates number of *shlok* in a given *sarg*, and its cumulative sum to the preceding *sarg*.

² मां विद्धि मूलप्रकृतिं सर्गस्थित्यन्तकारिणम् । तस्य सन्निधिमात्रेण सृजामीदमतन्द्रिता ।। 1-1-34 (*Balkand, sarg-1, shlok-34*)

³ Refers to *Balkand, sarg-1, shlok-37*

supreme spirit, i.e., with me. Ram concluded, “The explanation so far given by Sita and me, is in essence elaboration on my attributes, and is called core knowledge (राम हृदय).”

Sri Mahadev counseled Parvati to properly assimilate this essence elucidating Ram, which is well illustrated by the fact of eternity of *parmatma* (परमात्मा supreme spirit, almighty), *prakriti* (प्रकृति jagat, world), and *jeev* (जीव individual soul or being).

1-2 Cry of goddess earth (32 / 88)

Parvati was glad to hear about the crux of knowledge, and she expressed her desire for more details on the pastime (लीला) of Ram. Enjoying the opportunity of reciting his glory again, Mahadev said, “Once Ram told his pastime to me (1-2-4 रामेणोक्तं पुरा मम), and I would recite the same to you now.”

‘Once, earth got upset with the atrocities of Ravan and other demons. In the guise of a cow, and accompanied by sages she approached Brahma. She narrated the demons’ atrocities over her (over earth). Brahma through his meditative potential could see what she had told her. Taking them together, he arrived at the coast of *ksheersamudr* (क्षीरसमुद्र the milky ocean), and submitted his passionate prayer.

Srihari (श्रीहरि) appeared in the eastern direction as if thousands of suns had appeared. The light was so brilliant and intense that with great difficulty Brahma could have a glimpse of him. His complexion was like shining bluish diamond; He had wide eyes like blossoming lotus, and beaming face with benign smile; Jewels of radiant crown, earring, armlets, garland and *kausatubh* (unique gem) between the icons of *srivats*⁴ (श्रीवत्स) over his chest made him still brighter; he had golden *ygyopaveet* (यज्ञोपवीत sacred thread), and wrapper; Surrounded by *sanakadik* (सनकादिक) sages, his four hands were equipped with disc (चक्र), conch (शंख), mace (गदा), and lotus (पद्म). Mounting *garud* (गरुड) he was accompanied on either side by his divine consorts *sridevi* (श्रीदेवी), and *bhudevi* (भूदेवी).

Brahma was lost in the rare glimpse, and he offered humble prayer in the lotus feet of *srihari*. When *srihari* enquired, ‘What can I do for you?’, Brahma submitted, “Ravan, the grandson of Pulastya, has created havoc over earth. My boons have made him arrogant. His death is ordained by a human, therefore you may kill him assuming a human form.”

Srihari assured, “I am bound by the boon to Kshyap कश्यप (and Aditi) to take birth as his son. He now rules Ayodhya as Dasarath. I would incarnate along with my other four divine icons from the womb of Kauslya (and other two queens). My potency called *yogmaya* (योगमाया) shall incarnate as Sita in the house of Janak.” Saying thus, *srihari* disappeared. Following this, Brahma commanded the gods, “Srihari will incarnate as son of Dasarath in the house of Raghu at Ayodhya. It is time for gods to take birth as

⁴ Left chest has an icon of *shri* (श्री), and right chest has another icon of foot print of the sage Bhṛugu. This foot print caused him a title of upholder of devotees as a cow affectionately upholds her calf (वत्स).

monkeys and extend all assistance to him as long as he stays over earth. Gods in the guise of monkeys landed here and there over earth awaiting the manifestation of *srihari*.

1-3 Advent of Ram (66 / 154)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

‘Once, Dasarath was concerned that he had no issue. Inviting Vashishath’s initiatives he solicited for a son. Vashishath assured him, “Invite Rishyashrung, husband of Shanta. I would extend all assistance to him, and he would perform son-securing *ygya*. You will be blessed with four sons.”

The king invited Rishyashrung, and *ygya* was commenced. Pleased by the oblation, fire god appeared with a golden pot containing *payas* (पायस sweet rice with milk). Handing over pot to the king, the fire god spoke, “This blessed *payas* is prepared by gods and this will beget almighty as your son.” Handing over the pot to the king, fire god disappeared. The king offered his humble respect to the feet of Rishyashrung and Vashishath. Subsequently he distributed the *payas* to Kauslya and Kaikeyi. With a desire to be blessed with son, when Sumitra also arrived, Kausalya and Kaikeyi offered half from their share of *payas* to her. Consequently all the queens were pregnant.

During the period of tenth month (1-3-13), Kauslya gave birth to a male child. It was ninth day of the bright fortnight of *chairtr* (चैत्र). The advent time⁵ of the almighty was marked with the ascendancy of cancer (कर्क लग्न), *punarvasu nakshatra* (पुनर्वसु नक्षत्र), five exalted stars, besides exalted sun in Aries (मेष).

Heavens showered flowers. He was in his divine form of four hands holding the icons of disc, conch, mace and lotus. His complexion resembled blue lotus and eyes to the red lotus. He was having jewels of crown, earrings, armlets, anklets and garland of *vaijayanti* (वैजयन्ति माला) flower. His radiant face beamed with smile, and curly black hair rolled over shoulders. Wrapped in yellow silk, he attracted mother Kausalya’s attention. Overjoyed, Kausalya offered her sincere prayer chanting his glory and finally submitted, “I am really fortunate to see your rare form, now show up as a common child”.

Srihari mentioned, “My advent is in honour of my words to Brahma, and is aimed to eliminate Ravan and other demons. I have also fulfilled your desire which you had sought through your erstwhile penance with Dasarath. You are really fortunate to have glimpse of my rare form. Those who will recite or listen to this episode, will attain *sarupya moksh* (liberated soul blessed with my divine form) for they will never lose my sight at the time of death.”

⁵ दशमे मासि कौसल्या सुपुत्रे पुत्रमदभुतम् । 1-3-13

मधुमासे सितेपक्षे नवम्यां कर्कटे शुभे । पुनर्वसुक्षसहिते उच्चस्थे ग्रहपञ्चके ।। 1-3-14

मेघं पूषणि संप्राप्ते पुष्पवृष्टिसमाकुले । आविरासिज्जगन्नाथः परमात्मा सनातनः ।। 1-3-15

Thereafter he assumed the form of a child. Hearing the birth of a male child, the king Dasarath accompanied by *guru* Vashishath arrived in the inner palace, and had a look at the charming child. Subsequently Kaikeyi gave birth to a son, and Sumitr gave birth to two sons. The king liberally gave gifts of thousand villages, gold, gems, garments and cows to Brahmins.

Later, *guru* Vashishath christened their names, “The eldest son who is a source of visual delight to others is Ram; The second son who will prove upholder of the earth is Bharat; The third one possessed with auspiciousness is Lakshaman; The fourth one slayer of enemies is Shatrughn. Lakshaman was born from the share of *payas* which Kausalya had spared for Sumitr, and similarly Shatrughn was born from the share of Kaikeyi’s *payas* given to Sumitr. This inherent sharing affinity constituted two pairs: (i) Ram and Lakshaman, and (ii) Bharat and Shatrughn. They were always seen⁶ grouped in the pair form.

Dasarath and Kausalya enjoyed their childhood. They were delighted when they saw their limping tiny legs stumbling behind the calves. The gems arranged in the form of *peepul* leaf over their foreheads, waist having rings and tiger nails wreathed together, and ringing notes of anklets had been source of joy in the royal courtyard.

While taking food, Dasarath used to call Ram to share food with him. When he didn’t answer his call, Kausalya used to run behind him. Low and behold! She was not able to catch him. Realizing, mother was tired of running behind him, he used to run fast close to Dasarath with mud smeared hands and feet. Taking a parcel of food, he would again ran out beyond access. This is how the childhood days passed on. Feasts marked every occasion of monthly or weekly occurrence of birth days.

Once Ram sought from Kausalya some sweet food items, which she couldn’t hear. Angry Ram broke all the utensils using a baton in his tiny hands. The butter burst out of the broken pots and Ram enjoyed distributing among his brothers. Some part of butter fell on floor. When Kausalya was in sight, the brothers ran away. The chasing mother could manage difficult run over slippery floors. Finally they were caught, and drawn affectionately close to the mother’s chest.

When they entered their teens, *guru* Vashishath performed their *ygyopaveet sanskar* (investiture of sacred thread). They were subsequently initiated to the learning of scriptures, archery, horse riding etc. Every day morning, getting ready with bath and worship etc they used to bow their heads to the feet of parents. Riding horses they used to visit forests for hunting violent animals. They used to listen regularly to lessons of scriptures from the teachers and sages. They also used to comment on the explanations of the scriptures.

⁶ Lakshaman was incarnation of *shesh*, and therefore he always remained with Ram (*narayan*). Bharat and Shatrughn were divine icons of conch and disc, and therefore naturally they formed one separate group.

1-4 Vishwamitr (33 / 187)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Vishwamitr, having come to know about presence of almighty in the form Ram, arrived in Ayodhya. Dasarath greeted him warmly and enquired any service for him. The sage Vishwamitr narrated the incidents of obstructions in his religious pursuit by Marich and Subau. The sage demanded Ram and Lakshaman from the king. He also advised king to consult Vashishath in this regard.

Dasarath consulted Vashishath, "I have been blessed with four godly sons after lapse of a large part of my life. Although all are dear to me, I have utmost affection for Ram. I can't survive in his absence. How to handle the situation ? If point blank I say 'no' to the sage he will curse me."

Vashishath encouraged him, "I would like to share one confidential aspect about Ram. He is not an ordinary human being. Earlier yow were Kashyap, and Kausalya was Aditi. Both of you carried out a tough penance to please *Narayan*, and fetched a blessing that *Narayan* would born as a son to you. Now you have got *Narayan* as Ram, and Lakshaman is incarnation of *sheshnag*. Bharat is incarnation of *shankh* (conch) of *vishnu*, and Shatrughn represents *chakr* (disc) of *vishnu*. *Yogmaya* has already incarnated as Sita, daughter of king Janak. You should happily offer both of them to the sage. He will take them to Janakpur where Ram will be married to Sita, his divine consort."

Dasarath, called Ram and Lakshaman, and as a mark of affection, took inhale of aroma of their head, and readily offered them to Vishwamitr. Both the brothers fully equipped with bow, arrow and swords left accompanying the sage. After a while, they paused and Vishwamitr offered two divine weapons to Ram. Those weapons were *bala* (बला), and *atibala* (अतिबला) who help win over the influence of hunger and tiredness to the possessor.

Moving forward they crossed *ganga*, and arrived in *Tataka van* (forest). The sage alerted them, "Never relent over *Tataka*. She is a dreadful demoness. You should soon kill her." When Ram produced terrible sound from the string of his bow, the demoness stormed over them. Ram swiftly charged an arrow over her chest, which caused her immediate end. The sage was glad to see the gallantry performance of Ram. As a token of affection to Ram, he sniffed his head. Thereafter, the sage blessed Ram, and offered all potential weapons to him which he had in his possession.

1-5 Ahalya (65 / 252)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

The sage, thereafter continued on his destination, and on way made a night halt in *kamashram van*. Next morning they set out for *siddhashrm*. On their arrival at *siddhashram* the sages greeted warmly Vishawmitr, Ram and Lakshaman.

Subsequently on the assurance of Ram, Vishwamitr commenced his *ygya*. By noon time Marich and Subahu attacked over the *ashram* causing rain of blood and bones. Ram shot two shafts, out of which one hurled Marich hundred *yojan* away in sea, and the other killed Subahu on the spot. By this time Lakshaman killed other demons successfully. The *ygya* of Viswamtir was concluded successfully. Overjoyed Vishwamtir, took Ram in his lap and offered him varieties of fruits to eat. Enjoying *ashram* life and listening to varieties of legends narrated by the sage, Ram stayed there for three more days.

On the fourth day, Vishwamitr informed Ram, "Janak has organized an important *dhanush ygya*. We will go there and see the bow of Shiv. Janak will extend warm reception to you." Subsequently they moved towards Janakapur. On way, they moved past one *ashram* situated on the bank of *ganga* surrounded by trees but was devoid of any being, animals and birds. Ram was excited to see the *ashram*, and enquired from Vishwamitr the details about that.

Vishwamitr narrated the story.

This ashram was earlier occupied by Gautam. Impressed by the austerity of the sage, Brahma gifted him a beautiful girl for his service. She was known as Ahalya. Indr had an evil eye on her. Once when the sage was out, Indr disguised as Gautam enjoyed the association of Ahalya. In the mean while the sage arrived, and when Indr tried to escape, he asked about his identity. Indr disclosing his identity sought mercy from Gautam. Indr was cursed to have marks of thousand sex organs over his body. Thereafter, the sage cursed Ahalya to stay in the stone mass losing her physical form. Gautam spoke to Ahalya, "Continue meditation over almighty Ram. This *ashram* shall have no animal or birds. After thousands of years when Ram will arrive here, he will touch you with both of his holy feet, and you will regain your physical form." Gautam, speaking thus to Ahlya left for the Himalayas.

Holding Ram with his hands, Vishwamitr took him inside, and showed him the stone mass. When he asked him to liberate her, Ram kept his foot over the stone and mentioned, "I am Ram, and I offer my respect to you." Hearing this Ahalya regained her original physical form. She could have a glimpse of divine vision in Ram; he was four handed equipped with disc, conch, mace and lotus; the chest was decorated with *srivats* and *kaustubh*. He was wrapped in yellow silk with *vaijainti* garland around his neck. She was glad to remember the words of Gautam. Subsequently with overjoyed tearful eyes she chanted the glory to Ram. Thereafter giving respectful round to Ram, she departed to Gautam.

Note: This sarg ends with a glory. "This episode of Ahalya is very sacred and those who recite it are endowed with auspiciousness. If a barren woman or issueless man has a wish for a child, its faithful recitation is capable of begetting child within one year."

1-6 Bow and wedding (82 / 334)

Sut (सूत) continued the recitation of legend as narrated by Mahadev to Parvati.

Subsequently, Vishwamitr left with them for Mithila, the city of Janak. Coming to the *ganga* bank they asked for boat, and the boatman spoke, "I can't take across Ram unless I wash his feet perfectly. The dust of his feet is capable of converting a stone into a woman. There is hardly any difference between stone and wood (for both are inert). If my boat turns into a woman I would lose my earning of livelihood which is assured from this boat." Saying thus the boatman washed his feet and took them across *ganga*.

Taking route to Mithila they arrived there in the morning and stayed at a place where other sages were staying. When Janak heard about arrival of *Kaushik* (another name of Vishwamitr), he came to pay his respect to him. Offering his salutation to the feet of the sage, the king had a look at two princes accompanying the sage. Impressed by the aura of two brothers, he offered them due respect and mentioned, "Who are they? I have a feeling as if I have a vision of *nar* and *Narayan*."

The sage introduced Ram and Lakshaman to Janak, "They are sons of Dasarath. I had sought their hands from Dasarath, to help complete my *ygya*. On way to my *ashram*, Ram killed the dreadful demoness Tatak with one arrow. Subsequently he killed Subahu, and shot Marich alive in sea. On completion of my *ygya*, I took him here to show the great bow of Shiv. On way, before crossing *ganga* Ram liberated Ahalya from the curse of her husband. Touch of his holy feet transformed her back to her original form. Offering worship to him, she had joined her husband Gautam."

Thereafter the sage spoke to Janak, "I have heard that the bow of Shiv is worshipped by you, and several kings had a glimpse of it. Ram is here now, and you may show him the great bow. He wants to go back to see his parents."

Janak immediately commanded his minister to bring the bow. When the minister was out, the king proposed to the sage Vishwamitr, "If Ram strings the bow, I would marry my daughter Sita to him." Hearing the king's proposal, the sage looked smilingly at Ram. The bow was brought by five thousand strong carriers. It was fully decorated with rings and garlands.

Ram was glad to see the great bow. He got up and lifted the bow by his left hand, and strung it readily. In presence of other kings, when he pulled the string, the bow broke with a loud sound audible in all the worlds of gods, sages, *siddha*, and netherland. Gods showered flower over Ram, celestial drums sounded sweet notes, and heavenly damsels presented delightful dances.

The king Janak embraced Ram, and queens heard a pleasant surprise. Subsequently Sita arrived there walking on steady steps, beaming with sweet smile, and holding a golden garland in her right hand. She gladly garlanded Ram. The scene was witnessed by women and queens looking from windows and terraces of the mansions.

Thereafter, Janak submitted to Vishwamitr, "The warm message should be sent to the king Dasarath, inviting him for the marriage of all the princes. He is welcome here with

all his sons, *gurus*, and ministers.” Accepting his proposal, Vishwamitr sent fast messengers to Ayodhya.

When the messengers informed the king Dasarath with the heartening news, the overjoyed king asked his ministers to make arrangement to move to Mithilapuri immediately, “Keep ready my chariot. Keeping sacred fire, Arundhati (wife of Vashishath) with Vashishath, and mothers (1-6-38) of Ram in front, let us move henceforth.” Soon the marriage procession moved for Mithila.

Subsequently, when Janak heard about the arrival of the king, he went forward with his *guru* Shatanad to receive him with warm greetings. Ram and Lakshaman met Dasarath and bowed low to his feet. Embracing Ram, Dasarath expressed his happiness, “After a long time, I see your charming face. By the grace of the sage, everything has come up well.” He again drew him close and sniffed his head as a mark of intense affection. Thereafter Janak took the king, queens and others to the place of their comfortable stay.

On the day of auspicious moment for wedding, Janak invited Ram to a well decorated widely spread *mandap* (मंडप marquee). It had sleek and bejeweled poles, attractive arches, fruits, flowers and leaves of pearls and gems, and was occupied by holy priests clad well with garments and jewels. The place was crowded with married, beautifully clad charming women. Ram was given an excellent golden seat. The environment was pervaded with sweet notes of music and songs.

Shatanand worshipped Vashishath and Vishwamitr, and offered them proper seats on either side of Ram. Flaming sacred fire was made ready. Janak arrived with beautifully dressed Sita, and washing the holy feet of Ram by his own hands, drank and sprayed the holy washed water over his head. He felt lucky that he got the same holy water which was usually accepted by Shiv, Brahma, and sages over their heads.

Holding the hand of Sita, with sacred rice and water, and following the procedures of wedding, Janak placed her hands over the hand of Ram; Thereafter he mentioned, “Be glad. I offer fully dressed, and bejeweled Sita to you.” On doing this, Janak was overjoyed, as if he felt the pleasure of ocean who had offered the hands of goddess *Lakshmi* to *Vishnu*. In close succession, he married his daughter Urmila to Lakshaman, and his brother's daughters Mandavi and Shrutikirti to Bharat and Shatrughn respectively.

Janak then narrated to Vashishath and Vishwamitr what once Narad had told him about Sita.

‘Once I had tilled the *ygya* land for its purification. With the turn of soil from the ploughshare, I could recover Sita from the earth. Having daughter like affection with the baby, I handed her to my wife. Later I was alone, and Narad arrived playing *Narayan's* glory on his violin called *Mahati* (महती) (1-6-61). When I offered him warm respect and he settled in his seat he spoke to me, “I disclose very important fact to you today. For the wellbeing of the sages and common people, *Narayan* has incarnated as Ram in the

house of Dasarath. He has incarnated with his full potency contained in four parts: (i) He Himself, *shesha* (शेष), *shankha* (शंख) and *chakr* (चक्र). His eternal consort *yogmaya* has arrived to your place as Sita. You have to be fully abiding in marrying Sita to Ram and no other person.” Saying thus he left by sky route.

Thereafter I thought a way out to ensure her marriage to Ram. After defeating Tripur demon, Mahadev had handed over his bow to my grandfather. I used that sacred bow as an item of my vow. Pleasant Janak further mentioned, “Today that technique reaped fruit. I am really fortunate to get the holy washed water over my head. It is this holy water which blessed Bali (बली) to become Indr. Holy dust of his feet has emancipated Ahalya. I seek refuge in that holy feet which had made gods and sages fearless.”

Concluding the story, Janak gave fabulous dowry gifts: one billion *dinar* (दीनार gold coins) (1-6-76), ten thousand chariots, one million horses, six hundred elephants, one hundred thousand infantry, and three hundred maids. He also gifted lots of precious garments, jewels, gems and gold to Sita separately. This was followed by honors bestowed upon Vashishath and other sages. He gave fabulous gifts to Dasarath, Bharat, Lakshman, Shatrughn and the married daughters at the time of their farewell.

The queens of Mithila giving warm send off to their daughters advised, “Be subservient to your mothers-in-law, and husband.” Concurrently sweet sound of celestial kettle drums, and other instruments of Mithila pervaded the air.

1-7 Prashuram (57 / 391)

After leaving Mithila, hardly Dasarath had covered about three *yojan* on way to Ayodhya, that he noticed bad omens. He enquired from Vashishath about their implications. But looking around Vashishath could observe deer running on right of the king, therefore he assured the king, “The end would be favorable and auspicious.” While they were discussing that the wind picked up high speed.

Dasarath saw Prashuram on his front. He appeared very angry, and the king was so much scared that he forgot to greet him and cried, “Help me, help me!. Bless my sons with longevity.” Ignoring Dasarath, he moved to Ram, “You have broken the old bow, and have assumed yourself to be a great and mighty warrior. Come on, and try your potential with me. Take my *vaishnav* bow and if you could string it, then only I would fight with you otherwise, adhering to my practice of eliminating *kshatriya*, I would kill all of you.”

Ram grabbed the bow from his hand, and in a trice, strung that. Loading an arrow from his quiver, Ram asked, “This arrow is infallible. It will either destroy your earned potential from lifelong penance or damage your foot restricting your movement.”

Prashuram losing his radiance realized the divinity of Ram and submitted, “I recall the predictions of Vishnu now. In early age I had taken penance at *Chakr thirth* (चक्रतीर्थ) to

please Vishnu. He appeared and blessed me to kill Kirtvirya Arjun, the killer of my father. He directed me to devoid the earth from *kshatriya* for twenty one times and offer the earth to *Kshyap* after grabbing it from *kshatriya*. During *tretayug* (त्रेतायुग), I would incarnate as Ram, and withdraw your potency. You will then be free only to undertake penance and remain on earth until end of the *kalp*. I did as directed by him. Therefore use the arrow to take away my earned penance and release me for undertaking the penance again.”

As advised, Ram blotted his penance using the arrow. Chanting his glory, and giving round to Ram, Prashuram offered salutation to him, and left for *mahendra* mountain.

Dasarath embraced Ram as if he had comeback alive from the death trap. Thereafter, they arrived in Ayodhya, and Ram with brothers and wives spent happy days.

Later, Yudhajit, the maternal uncle of Bharat, arrived to take Bharat to kaikeydes. The king Dasarath allowed Bharat and Shatrughn to depart with Yudhajit for *kaikeyades*.

2. Ayodhya Kand

(9 sarg)

2-1 Narad met Ram (41/41)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

One afternoon Ram was relaxing in the courtyard while Sita was fanning his face. In the mean while, Ram saw Narad descending down from sky. He got up and greeted the sage. After offering him seat he enquired about the purpose of his arrival, "What can I do for you?" The sage praised Ram and Sita, for their divinity, and chanted the glory of their potency. He mentioned, "Individual soul loses the contact with the almighty due to prevalence of ignorance, and lack of understanding the purpose of this life. Sita is the potency of *yogmaya* who creates, protects and nourishes all the beings. All this happens under your command. My father Brahma was born from your navel, and therefore I am your grandson. I seek your compassion on servant of servants like me."

Subsequently Narad disclosed, "Brahma has directed me to see you. The king Dasarath now intends to coronate you. Once you are involved in the royal responsibilities, the main objective of your advent to kill Ravan is feared to have been put to back burner." Ram replied with a smile, "I am conscious to my vow of eliminating the demons. Everything will take place as ordained. Tomorrow I would depart to Dandak forest for fourteen years (2-1-38) and stay there in the garb of an ascetic. On the pretext of Sita's abduction Ravan shall be subsequently killed."

Narad was happy to hear Ram and as a mark of respect, he offered three rounds to him. Bowing head to his feet, he left through the sky route.

2-2 Preparations for coronation (83 / 124)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Dasarath invited Vashishath to his chamber and submitted, "The citizens are happy with the nobility of Ram. I have become old, and although Bharat and Shatrughn are out, I prefer to coronate Ram as king tomorrow. You may take Ram in confidence, and advise Sumantr to make necessary arrangements for tomorrow's functions."

Sumantr was summoned and Vashishath enlisted the course of tomorrow's function, "Tomorrow morning sixteen maiden fully dressed and bejeweled shall stand on the main entry. Four excellent elephants of *airavat* breed should be present. Thousands of gold pots should be arranged filled with water of sacred places. Three new deer skin, and one royal umbrella should be kept ready. Varieties of garments and jewels, sages holding *kush* in their hands, should be available at the venue of coronation. Dancers and musicians should commence their presentations. Contingent of armed forces with elephants, chariots, and horses should stand in readiness outside the venue. The

deities of all the temples should be worshipped, and the vassal kings should be invited to be present with varieties of gifts.”

After discussing with Sumantr, Vashishath was driven in his chariot to the palace of Ram. Crossing three thresholds, and without doing any formality of sending message of his arrival, he walked straightway in the inner chamber of Ram. He received warm greeting from Ram and Sita, who washed his feet, and sprayed the holy water over their head.

Impressed by the modesty of Ram, Vashishath spoke to him, “Brahma, Mahadev and others crave to receive holy washed water of your feet, but today for the benefit of common man you have demonstrated to them as to how to behave with guru, and you have taken the water of my feet over your head. I am really fortunate. I know you are born to kill demon Ravan but others are not aware of this fact. The occupation of a royal *guru* is not praiseworthy, and scriptures advise to keep away from such position (2-2-28 पौरोहित्यमहं जाने विगर्ह्यदूष्यजीवनम्). Still I accepted this position in your family because Brahma had earlier informed me that in the family of *Ikshavaku*, *Narayan* would arrive in human form as Ram. I feel privileged today, and I seek one favour that your *maya* (delusion) should not afflict me in my life.” He also assured Ram that he will not repeat such things again in future.

Thereafter he disclosed to Ram the message of the king Dasarath that tomorrow he would be crowned as the king. He advised Ram to keep fast with Sita until tomorrow, and maintaining celibacy use ground as your bed. He left, saying he would see them tomorrow during coronation.

Looking towards Lakshaman, Ram spoke to him, “Tomorrow I would be crowned but you will be the real regal actor, since you are my soul wandering outside.” Vashishath coming back to the king, made him aware of his meeting with Ram.

Someone announced in the city about tomorrow’s function. He also informed Kauslya and Sumitr. Happy to learn about the coronation, Kausalya gave a precious gift to the person who gave her the news. Later she worshipped goddess Lakshmi (2-2-42 लक्ष्मीं पर्यचरद्देवीं). She had a hunch of Kaikeyi’s obstruction, and therefore she also worshipped *durga* दुर्गा (2-2-43 इति व्याकुलचित्ता सा दुर्गा देवीमपूजयत् ।).

In the meanwhile, gods invoked the services of goddess *sarswati* to poison the mind of Manthara and Kaikeyi. When Manthara, who had three distortions in her body, went up the terrace she noticed the festivity of Ayodhya. The streets and mansions were decorated with lights and festoons. Coming down she learnt from other maid, “Tomorrow is the coronation of Ram and that is why Kauslya is distributing gifts to others.”

She rushed to Kaikeyi and told her, “O Fool! You are sleeping unaware of your ill luck.” Learning about the coronation of Ram from Manthara she gave one bejeweled anklet to her and spoke, “It is good luck that Ram shall be king. He takes my care more than

Bharat.” Manthara poisoned her mind, “You are naïve, and the king is cunning. He drove away Bharat and Shatrughn and arranged the coronation in their absence. Once Ram is king, Lakshman being quite close to him shall enjoy the regal honor. Bharat shall either be banished or killed, and you will become forever the maid of Kauslya. I tell you that you must demand two boons from the king. First, Bharat shall be crowned king, and second, Ram to be sent for fourteen years to forest. I remember you told me that fighting demons from the side of gods, the nail of the axle of the chariot of the king Dasarath had broken, and your skillful hand had averted the disaster. When the battle was over, the king noticed your hand engaged in the axle to keep the chariot running. Pleased with your brave services he asked you for two boons, but you deferred them keeping them in his custody. You should today claim those boons. Go and lie on floor of the *kopbhavan* (कोपभवन) (displeasure cell) without any jewels over your body. You will not listen to the flattering words of the king until he meets your demand.”

After a while, Kaikeyi got convinced by the advice of Manthara. She did what Manthara had advised her, and spoke to her, “I will not leave the displeasure cell unless the king meets my claims.”

Assured of Kaikeyi’s resolve, Manthara left for her house.

2-3 Kaikeyi realized the boons (80 / 204)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Making proper arrangements for tomorrow’s function, the king entered the palace of queen Kaikeyi. Finding lonely chamber, he enquired the maid about Kaikeyi. He was told that she was confined in the displeasure cell. He entered the cell, and touching her body enquired the reason for her anger, “Tell me who has caused this condition? Whom should I punish or if required pronounce death penalty. I can’t stay without you. I swear by Ram, that I will do what suits you.”

When Kaikeyi heard the king swearing by Ram, she wiped the tears and spoke, “You are truthful to your words and you have sworn also by Ram. I must clarify my stand. I take you to the period of battle between gods and demons. Impressed by my bravery you gave me two boons and they are in your custody. Today I claim those two boons. One, Bharat should be crowned tomorrow the regent prince, and two, Ram shall leave for fourteen years for forest where he shall remain in the garb of sages eating fruits and roots. Thereafter he can come back to Ayodhya or go wherever he likes. If he doesn’t go to forest tomorrow morning I shall end my life.”

The king was shocked and fell over the floor like a damaged mountain. In a short while, he recovered and thought, “was that a dream ?” He found Kaikeyi near him sitting like a lioness. He asked her to exempt Ram from such harsh punishment and mentioned, “I accept Bharat to be crowned tomorrow but no banishment to Ram. It is you, who on several occasions had praised Ram to be lovable and endearing to you. Why do you exile him? Don’t do this.” She didn’t relent and mentioned, “If he doesn’t leave tomorrow

morning for the forest I would take poison or hang down before you to end my life. For dishonoring your words, I am sure you will face hell.

While the king was drowned in the sorrow and remained unconscious, it was dawn time. The bards coming to wake up the king were prevented by Kaikeyi. Over the central entry, maidens, elephants and all other arrangements for coronation were made ready. The citizens couldn't sleep at night and were passionately waiting to have glimpse of Ram 'clad in yellow silk coming with regal honor to be crowned as king'.

Sumantr couldn't track the king, and he quietly came to the chamber of Kaikeyi. When he offered his salutation and hailed his victory, the king didn't respond. He enquired from the queen, "Why does the king look agitated?" She spoke, "He couldn't sleep entire night and could only speak 'O, Ram!'. Better you go and get Ram here." Sumantr submitted to her, "Unless I get the king's command, how can I do that?" Responding to his words, the king asked him to get Ram.

Sumantr straightway went to Ram and spoke, "The king wants to see you immediately." A little surprised, Ram drove to the palace with Lakshaman. On the central entry he could see Vashishath and others whom he offered his symbolic honor and came to meet the father. When he offered his salutation in his feet, he wanted to get up and embrace him but he fell unconscious saying 'O, Ram! O, Ram!'. Upset Ram, picking him up in arms, took him in his lap.

Seeing the condition of the king, women of the palace lamented loudly. Hearing the hue and cry inside the palace, Vashishath also arrived to the king. In the meanwhile, Ram enquired from the queen, "What is the reason? Why the king is in sorrow?" She replied, "This state of the king is because of you. You are truthful and you should make him also truthful. He is shy of talking to you." Ram was surprised over Kaikeyi's words. He further spoke, "Why do you speak like this? I can offer my life, can take poison for his sake. If need be I can discard Kauslya, Sita and the entire kingdom." Hearing his firm words, Kaikeyi again spoke, "Let me tell you the truth. I had two boons pending with the king. I claim those boons today. According to the first, with all necessary arrangements made for your coronation, let Bharat be anointed instead of you. Second, you leave immediately for fourteen years in the garb of an ascetic for forest."

Ram spoke to the queen, "O, Mother! Bharat must enjoy this kingdom, and I leave for Dandkarnya now, but why doesn't the king prefer to speak to me?" Hearing Ram's words, Dasarath broke his silence, "Ram! You must imprison the sinner like me who is immersed in lustrous luxury. Grab this kingdom, and become the master. I would also be freed from my words." Saying thus he wailed crying Ram! Ram!. He embraced Ram, and continued wailing.

Taking water in his hand, Ram wiped his tears and encouraged him with his sweet words, "There is nothing to worry if my younger brother has the reign in his hands. In due course, honoring your words I would also come back from forest. If I go to forest, it has several advantages. I would be able to serve the cause of the gods, mother Kaikeyi

shall remain happy, and your words shall be honored. Let these auspicious materials be kept safely for Bharat. I would leave immediately consoling Kauslya and Sita."

Saying thus, he gave respectful rounds to father Dasarath, and came straight to his mother. A little earlier, she had sent off Brahmins with precious gifts, and had taken a silent meditation praying Vishnu in her heart. Due to her deep concentration on the vision of Vishnu, she couldn't notice the presence of Ram.

2-4 Preparations for forest (87 / 291)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Sumitra touching Kauslya, made her aware of the presence of Ram. Kauslya drew him close in her laps, and sniffed his head. She spoke to him, "You must be hungry. Let me give you some sweets." Ram intervened and spoke to her, "Mother! I don't have time to eat. Under commitment to Kaikeyi, the king has given this kingdom to Bharat, and fourteen years forest term to me. I have to stay in forest in the garb of an ascetic. Bless me to leave for the forest."

Shocked at his words, she spoke, "If you really go to forest take me also with you. As per the wish of the king, the kingdom to Bharat is fine, but why did he exile you to forest? This is unreasonable. The king has used his discretion and you are bound to honor his words. You must honor my words also. If he sends you to forest, I use my discretion and stop you from going to forest. If you, disobeying my words proceed to forest, I shall end my life."

Seeing the condition of Kauslya, Lakshaman intervened, "I defy this royal decree. Under his lustful mind, he had given words to Kaikeyi. I am ready to imprison him, and advise you to proceed for coronation. I alone shall face the army of the maternal uncle of Bharat."

Taking Lakshaman in confidence, Ram responded in sweet words, "I admire your affection to me and I am aware of your valour. But before doing this let us ponder over the real truth. Our body is not our soul. The luxury and comfort to this body is as transitory as the lightening among the clouds, and the water drops over the hot iron. The relationship of son, father, mother, brother, relatives and friends is as uncertain as the staying together of woods brought by flood water. We evidently see that the fortune is swift like shadow, youth is transitory like tide, wife's comfort is like false dream, and the age is short, still we are arrogant of this body and life. Anger is the root cause of all destruction. You should reign your anger, and instead of being body centric, try to be soul centric."

Pacifying Lakshaman in several ways, he fell like a baton over the mother's feet, and maintained his prostration for some time. The mother, picked him up, and taking him in her lap spoke to him, "Let Brahma, Shiv, Vishnu and all other gods provide you safety while you move, sleep and sit in forest." Getting send off blessing from mother, Ram left for his palace to consol Sita. On way, Lakshaman spoke to him with welling tears, "You

have clarified my doubts. Accept me as your servant in the forest. If you deny me this opportunity, I would end my life.” Ram agreed to his proposal, and asked him come without further delay.

When he came near Sita, she washed his feet and expressed her surprises, “You came without army protection. Where is the royal umbrella? I don’t see crown over head!” Clearing her doubts, he spoke to her, “Father has awarded me the reign of Dandak. I have to go to forest for fourteen years, and instead of me, now Bharat shall be crowned. This is because of Kaikeyi’s pending boons with the king. To honour his words, I am moving for forest without any further delay.” Responding to his words, Sita submitted, “Before you move out, I would lead you to the forest.” Ram tried to convince her about the difficulties of forest life, “The route is full of thorns. The animals are violent. Fruits are sour and their stock and availability is limited.” She didn’t take his points, and further pleaded, “In your presence all the shortcomings shall be my comforts. I would take your left over, without any additional arrangement for me. In my childhood the astrologer has predicted about my forest life, and I see that coming true now. I ask you one more question. You have listened to Ramayan from several Brahmins, (1- 4 - 77 / 78 रामायणानि बहुशः श्रुतानि बहुभिर्द्विजैः ...77) on several occasions. Have you ever heard⁷ (सीतां विना वनं रामो गतः किं78) of Ram moving without Sita in the forest? If you deny me to go with you, I would prefer to end my life.”

Ram realized her resolve, and consented for her company to him. He advised her to gift her jewels to Arundhati, consort of Vashishath. He further called Brahmins, and attendants of his mother and gifted them all his belongings. In the meanwhile, Lakshaman offering his mother in the custody of Kausalya, joined him. On way to forest, Ram, Sita, and Lakshaman walking steadily over the main street of Ayodhya, arrived at the father’s palace. Onlookers had a rare view of divine union.

2-5 Departure to forest (73 / 364)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

On way to the king’s palace those who had a glimpse of moving trio were moved by the scene of separation. Some of them cursed Kaikeyi, while some cursed the king. Vamdev, the great among sages, pacified the crowd, “The moving trio of Ram, Lakshaman and Sita, is the divine incarnation of *Vishnu*, *Shesh* and *Lakshami*. Brahma who conducts the creation is *rajogun* (रजोगुण) form of *Narayan* (नारायण), in *satv gun* (सत्त्व या सतो गुण) form *Narayan* is Vishnu and sustains the universe. At the end of creation during dissolution *rudr* (रुद्र) is *tamogun* (तमोगुण) manifestation of *Narayan*.”

Vamdev (वामदेव) further gave the details of his various manifestations known from time to time, “ During dissolution flood, he assumed the form of a fish (मत्स्य), and saved the life of *vaivasvat* (वैवस्वत) Manu (मनु). On another occasion, when ocean stirring was in progress

⁷ This suggests the eternity of cyclic occurrences of *tretayug*, and accordingly repeating incarnations of Ram. This has been detailed in *srimadbhagvat mahapuran*.

he assumed the form of a tortoise (कूर्म) and supported the *mandrachal* to secure stability. During great dissolution, the earth had sunk down deep in water, and in boar (वराह) form he retrieved it after killing Hirnyaksh. For the safety of Prahlad, he assumed the man-lion (नृसिंह) form and killed Hirnyakashipu with his terribly sharp nails. On the prayer of Aidi, he incarnated as *vaman* (वामन) and restored the lost position of Indr. To eradicate the devil *kshatriya* he incarnated as *Prashuram*. In the present life as Ram, he will kill Ravan.”

Vamdev made some more revelations, “Dasarath had conducted in his previous life tough penance to please *Vishnu*. On his request, Vishnu agreed to oblige him as his son. He is that Ram, committed by Vishnu to Dasarath. Sita following him is eternal *prakriti* (प्रकृति), his close associate responsible⁸ for creation, sustenance and end. Yesterday when the divine sage Narad met him and reminded him of his vow, he assured to leave for forest today. Don’t worry about him. Recite his name which is worthy of fetching all auspiciousness in life.”

In the meanwhile, Ram arrived at his father’s palace and spoke to Kaikeyi, “I am now leaving for forest with Lakshaman and Sita. Let the king pronounce his command.” While he spoke thus, Kaikeyi brought three sets of ascetic’s garb. Ram and Lakshaman immediately changed their dress, but Sita didn’t know how to wear that. When she looked to Ram, he wrapped it over her apparel. Seeing this, the palace women lamented loudly. On their cry, Vashishath got upset, and spoke harshly to Kaikeyi, “Sita is not in your claim. She is following her husband to demonstrate her faith in him. She will proceed fully dressed as a married royal lady.”

Dasarath asked Sumantr to keep the chariot ready to escort them, and speaking thus he fell unconscious. Sita first rode the chariot followed by Ram, and Lakshaman mounted at the end holding twin swords, twin bows and twin quivers of arrows. They asked Sumantr to move, but the king cried to stop the chariot. Ram intervened and asked Sumantr to move and the chariot left Ayodhya. The citizens of Ayodhya followed the chariot.

Dasarath, after their departure, continued wailing and asked the attendants to take him to the palace of Kausalya. He also mentioned, “In absence of Ram I won’t live long.” When he was brought to the palace of Kausalya, he fell again unconscious.

Subsequently Ram arrived on the bank of the river Tamasa. He camped for the night and rested over the grass bed after taking only water. Lakshaman maintained vigil around him. When the citizens arrived there, he advised Sumantr to leave the place early, and he mentioned, “For my sake, why the citizens will live a difficult life in forest.” Subsequently, the chariot first left towards Ayodhya, and then turned towards forest.

⁸ The eternity of *prakriti* प्रकृति or *yogmaya* योगमाया suggests the eternity of *jagat* (जगत world), and *jeev* (जीव individual soul).

Later, when the citizens woke up, they didn't find the trio. Following the mark of wheel of chariot, they were misguided to Ayodhya.

Proceeding forward Ram arrived on the *ganga* bank near Shringverpur. Taking bath in the *ganga* he rested over grass bed under a *shinshupa* tree. The tribal king of the place, Guh heard about his arrival and he came to greet him with lots of fruits, honey and flowers. Ram met him warmly and embraced him to his chest. Guh was overjoyed by the warmth demonstrated by Ram. He spoke, "You are real friend of mine. I request you to grace my place with your presence." Ram was happy to hear his words but mentioned, "For fourteen years I have to stay as an ascetic out of towns and villages in forest. I won't have to eat the materials brought by others. I respect your affection to me."

Thereafter he dressed his own hair and that of Lakshaman in the style of ascetics using the milky sap of the banyan tree. Thereafter he slept with Sita taking water only, over the grass bed. Lakshaman, and Guh, keeping awake at night, equipped with bow and arrows, maintained vigil around him,.

2-6 Bharadwaj and Valmiki (92 / 456)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

At night, Guh (गुह) was moved by the state of simplicity of Ram and Sita. Having tears in his eyes, he spoke to Lakshaman, "See! Those who are born in royal heritage, and have been using regal luxuries, are now sleeping over grass bed. The destiny created Kaikeyi who falling prey to the mean minded Manthara, committed such a grievous sin."

Responding to him, Lakshaman spoke, "The sorrow is product of one's own deed in the past. Nothing is in one's control. No one control over the occurrence of either pain or pleasure. Therefore, one has to bear with the situation gladly. The life is a mix of joy and sorrow like mud and water together. There is lurking sorrow behind joy, and conversely joy hides behind sorrow. The learned people, therefore, maintain steadfastness of mind, neither jubilating in joy nor shocked in sorrow." While they were conversing thus, the dawn's twilight began brightening up.

Getting up, Ram attended to his daily routine, and asked for a boat to cross the *ganga*. Guh arranged a boat mentioning, he will himself sail them across the *ganga*. First, Ram helped Sita to board the boat, following that he himself boarded taking support of Guh. Lastly, Lakshaman boarded with all the weapons. When the boat sailed past the mid stream, Sita with folded hands offered her respectful prayer to goddess *ganga*, "While coming back after exile, I would worship you with Ram and Lakshaman."

Coming to the other bank, when they left the boat, Guh also expressed his intense desire to follow them in forest, otherwise he would end his life. Ram consoled him, "After fourteen years, I would come back to you. I am always true to my words. Believe me, and go back to protect your citizens and family." Guh returned with great difficulty.

Subsequently the trio arrived at the hermitage of Bharadwaj (भरद्वाज). Ram submitted to one of the disciples of the sage, “Kindly convey to the sage Bhardwaj that Ram, son of Dasarath, with Sita and Lakshaman desires his *darshan* (glimpse).” When the disciple informed the sage about his arrival, he rushed to greet him. Taking them inside the hermitage, he offered them respectful seats, and worshiped Ram with Lakshkhaman. Thereafter he spoke, “Because of your grace, and penance performed meditating upon you, I could see the past and the future. I am aware of all the incidents. Brahma’s prayer has caused you to incarnate in human form. Getting you here, I have reaped the fruit of my penance. I feel highly privileged and fortunate with my today’s tryst with almighty god.” Ram spoke in sweet words, “O, Brahmin! Having born in *kshatriya* family, I seek your blessings.”

Ram, Sita and Lakshaman stayed for a night at the hermitage. Next morning they crossed the river *Yamuna* with the help of a raft prepared by the disciples of Bharadwaj. Thereafter, as advised by the sage Bharadwaj, they moved towards *chitrakoot*, where Valmiki had his hermitage.

Arriving at the hermitage of Valmiki, they found the sage sitting amidst sages. The ashram was full of fruit bearing trees. The chirping birds, and union of all sorts of wild animals at this *ashram*, demonstrated its unique phenomenon. The trio offered their respectful salutation to the sage. When the sage realized the presence of Ram, he got up to greet him. Joyous tears welled up his eyes, and he embraced Ram closely to his chest. Thereafter, he offered them *arghya* (अर्घ्य water for washing hands, feet, and mouth) and sweet fruits.

Subsequently Ram spoke to him, “Honoring the words of my father, I have come to Dandak. You know everything, and therefore, I need not tell you more. Kindly indicate proper place, where I can stay with Sita and Lakshkhaman for some time.”

Valmiki submitted in sweet words, “Ram ! How can I indicate your place of stay, when You are the sole refuge of all the beings. Yes, what I see that you stay in the hearts of those who have peaceful mind, love all the beings, and carry no hatred at all. Your fond place is the heart of the devotees who incessantly chant your name and is devoid of greed and anger.”

The sage paid fond tribute to Ram, “I don’t have words to depict the glory of your name. My status to the stage of **brahmishi** (ब्रह्मर्षि knower of almighty) is due to your unqualified compassion on me. It has a reference to the hoary past, when I was born in a Brahmin family, but my association with *kirat* (tribal people) made me behave like *shudr*. I was trapped by *shudr* women, and produced host of children. In the association of thieves, I had become a veteran robber. Equipped with bow and arrow, I never hesitated in killing the humans or animals. Once I saw a group of sages passing through the forest. They had no precious belongings other than the simple clothes over their body. With mean mind, I intended to rob even the bare clothes from their body. I rushed to them asking to halt. The sages enquired about my intention, and I disclosed, “I roam

around in forest to rob others for the sake of earning livelihood for the upkeep of my family.”

The sages asked me, “Fine. Listen, O, misguided Brahmin! Go and find out from your family members whether they would share the sin accruing to your account due to your direct involvement in perpetrating atrocities over the passers of the forest. We will stay until you come back.”

Due to the grace of the sages, wisdom prevailed upon me, and I went to enquire from the family members what sages had advised. None of the family members expressed their willingness to share my sin. While coming back to the sages, sense of renunciation prevailed upon me, and throwing away the weapons, I prostrated over their feet. The sages’ heart melted upon me, and in total disregard of my accumulated sins of the past, they blessed me and advised, “Staying at this place, keep chanting ‘mara, mara’ (मरा मरा), i.e., Ram’s (राम का नाम) name in reverse order.” As directed by them, I sat down and continued chanting मरा मरा incessantly. In course of time, the complete passive state of my body attracted accumulation of dirt and dust over me, and subsequently I was buried inside debris of termite. After lapse of thousand yug (युग), the sages visited my place of penance, and called me to come out of the debris. Soon I came out and prostrated over their feet. They christened a new name to me, “Since you have come out of the debris of termite, which is called ‘valmik वल्मीक’ in sanskrit, we will call you ‘valmiki’ वाल्मीकि.” Thereafter they left.

Valmiki mentioned to Ram, “I am so fortunate that today I am able to have your glimpse. I have been really liberated.” Saying thus, he showed Ram his place of stay which was situated in between ganga (मन्दाकिनी) and the (chitrakoot चित्रकूट) mountain. His disciples erected at the indicated place two hermitages one running north south, and the other along east west. Ram, Lakshaman and Sita stayed comfortably, getting benefited by the association of sages, in newly raised ashram.

2-7 Scene in Ayodhya (114 / 570)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Subsequently, Sumantr, with covered face and tearful eyes, entered Ayodhya in the evening. Going close to the king he offered his respect to him. The king saw Sumantr, and while weeping enquired from him, “Where did you drop them? Do you have any message for me from them?”

Sumantr gave a detailed account of their night halt at Shrigverpur, and the warm hospitality of Guh. Before boarding the boat, Ram spoke, “Advise the venerable king not to worry about us. We have more comfort in forest than in Ayodhya. Convey my respectful salutation to the mothers, and keep on encouraging the aging king.” Having tears in her eyes, Sita, spoke to me, “Offer my salutation to the feet of two mothers-in-law.” Thereafter, they crossed the ganga. Getting them out of sight, with sorrowful mind, I came back to Ayodhya.

Kauslya interfered, "You blessed Kaikeyi with your pleasure. But why did you exile Ram? This is all because of your misdeeds, then why do you weep and lament?" Sorrowful king spoke to her, "Why do you rake my wounded heart with your harsh words? What benefit you derive now. I am dying because of my misdeeds. I am reminded of a curse to me."

Thus the king narrated the story of his curse.

In my young age, one night I was roaming around in forest for hunting. A sage was collecting water from the river. When he pushed down the empty pot in river stream, the sound coming out of the drowning pot appeared to me like the sound of a wild animal. Aiming at the sound, I shot an arrow that hit the sage and he fell flat crying, "Save me, I am killed." Repenting over my mistake, I rushed to him and revealed my identity, "I am Dasarath. By mistake I shot this arrow over you. I pray mercy on me." Saying this I fell over his feet. The sage responded, "Don't fear. You are not guilty of killing a Brahmin. I am a *vaishya* engaged in penance. My thirsty parents would be awaiting my return with water. Go and give them water, otherwise their anger might burn you to ashes. Paying your respect, narrate the incident to them. Take out this arrow from my body, then only I would be able to die."

Taking out the arrow from his body, I carried the water to them. I overheard them saying, "We are old and blind. Thirsty and hungry, we await the return of our son. We wonder his delay in coming back." In the meanwhile, I went close to them, and due to the sound of my footsteps, they spoke, "You have come, my son! How did you delay so long? Give us some water, and you also take some."

Touching their feet, I spoke, "I am Dasarath, king of Ayodhya, I apologise for my mistake, and narrating the incident, I sought their mercy on me. They asked me to carry them to their son. When I brought them near the dead sage, they touched his body and lamented loudly. Subsequently they asked me to prepare the pyre for the last rites of the dead sage. When the pyre was ready, they also joined the burning dead body of the sage, and departed from this world. While rising to the pyre, the father of the dead sage pronounced curse upon me, "The same will happen to you, and you also will die of sorrow of your son."

Concluding the story, Dasarath mentioned, "The time of the curse has arrived." Crying for Ram, Sita and Lakshaman, the king died. Kauslya, Sumitra and other women of the palace wept mourning the death of the king. In the morning, Vashishath arrived, and making arrangement of keeping the dead body in oil, he sent messengers to Bharat. He asked the messengers to convey to Bharat, "*Guru* Vashishath has asked you and Shatrughn to come soon to Ayodhya. " The messengers, on reaching Kaikeya desh met Bharat and made him aware of the command of *guru* Vashishath. Bharat and Shtrughn left immediately apprehending occurrence of some bad incident in Ayodhya.

When they entered the city of Ayodhya, it appeared deserted and desolated. Bharat arrived fast to the palace, and found Kaikeyi sitting alone. Bowing low, he touched her

feet. Having seen the arrival of Bharat, she drew him close to his chest and sniffed his head. She enquired about the wellbeing of her father and native place. She spoke, "My son! I am fortunate to see you today."

When Bharat anxiously enquired about his father, she disclosed about his demise. Bharat was shocked, and fell over ground. Wailing loudly he mentioned, "Without putting me to the custody of Ram, you left me alone."

Further he enquired from mother about any last message from the father. She mentioned, "In his last moments, he cried only Ram, Sita and Lakshaman." Bharat making a wild guess, enquired, "Were they also not present in his last moment? Where had they gone?"

Responding to his queries, she spoke, "I saved the situation. The king had fixed the coronation ceremony of Ram. Reminding him of my pending two boons with him, I claimed the kingdom for you, and exile to Ram for fourteen years in the garb of an ascetic. Consequently, following the husband, Sita also joined Ram, and Lakshaman followed him in forest due to his brotherly affection. Subsequently the king couldn't sustain the shock of separation of Ram, Sita and Lakshaman."

Hearing the words of Kaikeyi, Bharat fell on ground like a fallen tree. Kaikeyi tried to console Bharat, "Having been made king of such a great kingdom, why do you feel sorrowful?" Bharat couldn't tolerate the mother's words and burst out, "O, Sinner! You are killer of your husband. Conversing with you will cause great sin to me. Either I would take poison or kill myself with the sword. The dreadful hell, Kumbhipak, is due for you."

Saying thus, Bharat left for the palace of Kausalya. Getting close to her, he fell over her feet and wept bitterly. Kausalya also wept and spoke, "You must have heard about the details. Ram, Lakshaman and Sita must be loitering in forest. Vishnu being my son, couldn't save me against such bad days."

Bharat spoke to her swearing in several ways, "If I could have known anything about the Kaikeyi's plan, I would be a sinner of the category of killing guru with his consort. If I had known an iota of her mischievous deeds, I would be afflicted by the sin of killing hundreds of Brahmins." Saying thus he wailed and Kausalya consoled her drawing him close to her chest.

In the meanwhile Vashishath arrived and consoled Bharat in many ways, "The king Dasarath was an accomplished and pious soul. He performed scores of *ygya* and was blessed with Vishnu as his son. Leaving the mortal remains in his old age, he is now in with Indr holding half the heaven's reign in his command. When someone is born he is destined to die. Following this eternal rule of creation, he has also departed to heavens. Learned ones don't lament over the death. It is an essential part of the cyclic life. The body to a soul is the result of his deeds. This is like a person wearing new cloth, discarding the old one. Similarly upon death the soul enters a new body following the

consequences of his performances and deeds. The soul is eternal⁹, and is a witness to the blissful state of infinite supreme being i.e., almighty god. Almighty, being without any parallel, is omnipresent.”

He reminded Bharat to rise above the false notion, and take up the assigned duty with boldness. Bharat responding to the advice of Vashishath, performed the last rites, and on eleventh day feeding pious Brahmins with delicious dishes, he gifted hundreds of villages, scores of cows, and precious jewels to them.

Thereafter, while staying in the palace he felt, “The glimpse of Kaikeyi burns my heart every moment. I can’t bear this scene any more. He firmed up his mind to leave for forest, and serve Ram, and Sita there.

2-8 Bharat moved to Chitrakoot (66 / 636)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Subsequently, Vashishath called the meeting of the royal court and addressed Bharat, “The king, honoring his words to Kaikeyi, has given this kingdom to you. Today following the scriptural procedure we should perform your crowning ceremony.”

Hearing *guru’s* words, Bharat submitted, “This kingdom belongs to Ram, and I don’t have any claim on this. If I kill the devil Kaikeyi, Ram will never forgive me. Tomorrow I have planned to go to forest to persuade Ram to accept the kingdom. I pray all of you to bless me by your presence. Except Kaikeyi, everyone is warmly welcome to come to forest. If you are not coming, I would go alone with Shatrughn. Following Ram’s life style, I would adopt the garb of an ascetic and staying on roots and fruits shall sleep on ground.”

The gathering in the court appreciated Bharat’s resolve by consensus. The mass also expressed overwhelming support to go with Bharat. Next morning they left for forest. As commanded by Shatrughn, army lead the caravan to meet Ram in forest. Vashishath, queen mothers, and citizens of Ayodhya were in close company of Bharat. Subsequently, they arrived at Shrinverpur, and the camps were pitched at convenient places along the bank of *ganga*.

When Guh learnt about the arrival of Bharat accompanied by huge army, he suspected his evil design against Ram. He commanded all the boats to be taken off the bank and stay in the mid stream. Accompanied by his strong security, he came to see Bharat carrying gifts of fruits etc. On his arrival to Bharat’s camp, he saw him in an ascetic

⁹ *Shlok* 105, 106 and 107 confirm that individual soul is an eternal attribute of the almighty, the universal spirit.

आनन्दरूपो बुद्ध्यादि साक्षी लयविवर्जितः २-7-106. The individual soul of a being is witness to the eternal bliss of the almighty. It remains for ever as His attribute, and never dissolves in Him losing independent identity.

garb, engaged in chanting name of Ram. He was immediately impressed by him. Bowing his head low on ground, he offered his respect to Bharat, and said, "I am Guh."

Looking at Guh, Bharat got up, and picked him up. He embraced him to his chest, and wept bitterly. He spoke sobbing words to Guh, "You are fortunate that you are a friend of Ram, and you met him with Sita and Lakshaman. Take me to the place where they had stayed, I want to bow my head over there."

When Guh took him to the place where he had slept, Bharat was again immersed in sorrow seeing the grass bed, and some gold particles fallen down from Sita's jewel. His eyes again welled up with tears, and he spoke, "I am a great sinner, and only because of me, Ram had to face such a tough situation in life. Alas! Why did I get birth as a direct manifestation of sin from the womb of Kaikeyi. I admire the luck of Lakshaman, that he follows him in forest. If I become a servant of servants of Ram, I would feel satisfied with the worthiness of this life."

With tears in his eyes, he enquired from Guh, "If you know where is Ram now, I would immediately go to take him back to Ayodhya."

Guh was glad to observe the affection of Bharat for Ram; he mentioned, "Bharat! You are great. I am really impressed by your devotional affection to Ram. I have the information that Ram, Sita and Lakshaman are staying at Chitrakoot. Let us move now." Immediately, five hundred boats were pressed into service. Bharat, Shatrughn, Vashishath, and Kausalya boarded one royal boat, while Kaikeyi and other royal women had boarded another boat. Crossing the *ganga*, they moved towards the *ashram* of Bharadwaj.

When they arrived near the *ashram* of Bhardwaj, leaving the army and entourage behind, Bharat and Shatrughn moved to see the sage Bharadwaj. Getting inside the *ashram*, Bharat bowed on the feet of the sage. Realizing that Bharat had come, the sage greeted both the brothers with due honour. He enquired from Bharat, "Leaving the kingdom of *Ayodhya*, why did you assume the garb of an ascetic, and what is the purpose of your visit to forest of sages?"

Bharat taking hold of his feet, spoke to him, "Past and future are well known to you, still you ask me about my arrival. I swear by your holy feet that I didn't know at all in advance the mind of my mother seeking the kingdom of *Ayodhya* for me. When Ram is there, why do I need it. I only crave to be servant of servants of Ram."

The sage was overjoyed by the response of Bharat. He pulled him to his chest, and smelling his head spoke to him, "I have come to know all about the coming events from my potential. You need not worry. Ram has more affection for you. Accept my invitation to you, and your group, and stay one night with me."

Bharat accepted his invitation, and thereafter, the sage invoked the potential of *kamdhenu* (celestial cow) to serve the need of the guest at the hermitage. The sage

himself worshiped Vashishath, and thereafter everyone accompanying Bharat were greeted with due honor.

Staying at night with Bhardwaj, next morning, Bharat left for Chitrakoot. Trying to locate Ram, he visited several hermitages, but couldn't see him. Thereafter, he enquired from sages, "Are you aware of the place of stay of Ram, Sita and Lakshaman in Chitrakoot? The sages guided him indicating the exact location, 'Ram, Sita and Lakshaman stay on the northern bank of Mandakini, where varieties of trees are lined. When Bharat proceeded with his ministers in the indicated direction, he saw the garbs perched over tree branches. Further on way, he moved past the impressive natural scene full of flower and fruit bearing trees, and immediately on the other edge of the line of trees was seen the ashram.

2-9 Bharat met Ram (92 / 728)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

When Bharat moved closer to the *ashram*, he spotted over ground the foot prints of Ram marked with the signs of bolt, hook, flag and lotus etc. Both the brothers, Shatrughn and Bharat rolled over ground and appreciated their luck, 'these foot prints are rare to Brahma, gods and sages.' Subsequently when they got up, streaming tears had washed their chest. As they move ahead, they got the cherished sight of utmost visual delight, 'Ram and Sita attended by Lakshaman.'

Bharat racing towards Ram, took his holy feet in his hands. Using his long arms, Ram pulled Bharat close to his chest. Thereafter, mothers moved to Ram as if thirsty cows moved to the water source. Having seen the arrival of mother Kausalya, Ram bowed over her feet, and after her, he also greeted other mothers with the same respect. Soon he saw Vashishath coming, and touching his feet expressed, 'so fortunate I am!'

When they were seated, Ram enquired about his father, "Is he well, and what message he had given for me?" Vashishath disclosed, "The king, Dasarath, couldn't bear the pang of your separation, and uttering Hey Ram! Hey Sita! Hey Lakshaman! he quit the mortal remains.'

Ram was shocked, as if he was shot by a shaft, and fell unconscious over ground. Along with him, Sita and Lakshaman lamented loudly mourning the death of the king. Subsequently Vashishath consoled them, and they went to Mandakini and first offered water tribute to the departed soul of his father. While offering oblation consisting of fruit pulps and honey, Ram mentioned, "The scriptures prescribe only those stuff in oblation to the departed soul, which one takes as food." Taking bath, on conclusion of the oblation, they came back to *ashram*.

Keeping fast, they spent that day. Next morning, after taking bath in Mandakini and attending to normal routine of worship, Bharat came to Ram. He made a fervent appeal to him, "Forgive me for the mistake committed by my mother. I offer back your kingdom to you. Being elder brother, you are like my father. Only you can save me. You have sole

claim over the kingdom; accept the coronation now, and when your sons become eligible, after enthroning them you may proceed to forest life (of a *vanprashth*). At present, *vanaprashth* is not meant for you. Speaking thus he prostrated over his feet.

Ram pulled Bharat in his lap and showering tears over him spoke, "I agree what you say, but both of us are bound by the words of our truthful father. He had given you kingdom, and for me his command was to stay in forest as an ascetic for fourteen years. We must be abiding, failing which we will face the punishment of hell."

Bharat tried to convince him, "If someone is under the influence of lust of a woman, his words are not worth honoring." Ram countered his plea, "Our father was truthful to his words, which he had given long time back to mother Kaikeyi. I can't dishonor his words."

Bharat then submitted, "I would then remain in forest for fourteen years as an ascetic, and you would be the king of *Ayodhya*."

Ram tried to reason with him, "We shouldn't reverse the father's words, "The kingdom is for you, and forest is for me."

Thereafter, Bharat undertook the pledge of ending his life by fasting, and with this resolve he sat erect facing east. Using the movement of eyes, Ram sought the kind interference of Vashishath. Taking Bharat away from the gathering, in a lonely place, Vashishath revealed about the divinity of Ram, "His advent is to eliminate Ravan. Under gods' design of events, Kaikeyi's was possessed with evil mind."

Bharat was surprised over the revelation made by Vashishath, and coming to Ram, he requested him, "May I get your footwear for worship? In your absence, this will be my guide." Saying thus, Bharat put a footwear to Ram's feet. Ram obliged him, and putting his feet over the footwear, gave to Bharat. Thereafter, Bharat picked up the footwear, and carrying it over his own head gave round to Ram. Bowing to his feet several times, Bharat spoke, "I shall wait until the end of fourteen years. I would sacrifice my life in fire, if you are not back in *Ayodhya*, the very next day of the end of the forest term." When Ram assured him for his timely return to *Ayodhya*, Bharat advised the army to leave for the return journey.

While preparations were being made to leave for *Ayodhya*, finding Ram alone, Kaikeyi came to see him. With tearful eyes, and folded hands, she spoke to Ram, "I am a culprit. Under influence of delusion (an unseen force), I was possessed by evil mind. Consequently, I obstructed your coronation. You are so merciful ! Pardon my fault, and liberate me from the contemptible blemish. I have learnt that you are supreme and eternal spirit. Nobody can do anything, unless your creative potency (*maya*, माया delusion) allows him to perform. We are doll in the hands of *maya*. I am in your refuge now. Cut my bonds, and kill my infatuation for attachment to son."

Ram spoke to her, "You have got the correct perception. Your evil mind was due to malice designs of gods. Don't worry any more. Keeping your mind concentrated on me, you can find liberation." Hearing his assurance, she gave round to him, and keeping her

head over ground offered him numerous salutations. Thereafter she left, and Bharat and his army also left for *Ayodhya*.

Coming back to *Ayodhya*, Bharat settled at Nandigram a little away from *Ayodhya*. He installed the footwear as a deity and commenced its worship counting each day for return of Ram. Staying at fruits and roots, he adopted the same life style as Ram had adopted for his forest life.

Ram stayed for sometime in *Chitrakoot*. Local people used to crowd his place for his *darshan* (auspicious glimpse). Afraid of the rising crowd of visitors, he preferred to shift to a quieter place. In this process he arrived at the *ashram* of the sage Atri. He offered his respect to the sage, "I am Ram, and on my father's command I have come in Dandakaranya. I am blessed by your *darshan*."

Atri knew that Ram was almighty Himself, and accordingly offering fruits, he performed His affectionate worship. Subsequently he mentioned, "My consort is keeping penance for long, and is very religious minded. Her name is Anusuya, and she has become very old. Let Sita pay respect to her."

On the advice of Ram, Sita went to see Anusuya. When Anusuya saw Sita prostrating to her, she embraced and offered her two earrings, and two silk *sari* made by *viswakarma*. She also gave her *angarag* (अंगराग celestial cosmetics), and mentioned, "Using this *angrag*, you will never lose your charm. You shall always be affectionate to Ram, and return safely from exile. You should lead life of a chaste wife loyal only to Ram." Thereafter, she offered food to Ram, Sita and Lakshaman. Subsequently with folded hands she chanted the glory of Ram, "You have created all the worlds of the universe, and to protect the creation, you assume different forms of gods, humans and other beings. Staying in all the beings as their life force, you are never attached to them. The terrifying force of delusion, which afflicts all the beings, is always scared of you."

3. Aranya Kand

(10 sarg)

3-1 Viradh (46/46)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Ram, Sita and Lakshaman stayed at night with Atri, and next morning, they sought the guidance for moving towards Dandakaranya. Atri spoke to Ram, "You are omniscient, and nothing is unknown to you." However, he sent his disciple to escort them for their further journey. Coming to a river, the disciple arranged a boat and after crossing the river they bid farewell to the disciple.

They happened to pass through a terrifying lonely forest. Ram tightened the string of his bow, and spoke, "This is a dreadful forest. Let us be alert, and move with caution." Saying thus he placed Sita in the middle, keeping himself in front, while Lakshaman was on rear guard. **When they moved in this order it resembled as if *maya* (delusion) had separated *jeev* (individual soul) from *parmatma* (universal spirit).** (3-1-13

आवयोर्मध्यगा सीता मायेवात्मपरान्नोः)

They had covered over one and a half *yojan* that they found a placid lake covered with lotus and lilies. They took water to their fill and stayed for a while in a tree's shed. While they were under the tree, they saw a deadly demon coming towards them. He was eating buffalo and lion. He was holding an axe stabbing through several human skulls. Ram alerted Lakshaman, and advised Sita, not to panic. The demon, coming closer to them laughed very loudly, and asked their purpose of coming to forest. Hearing his query, Ram spoke, "I am Ram, and I am here with my wife Sita, and brother Lakshaman, with the sole aim to teach lessons to the demons like you."

The demon had a derisive laugh, and spoke, "I am known as Viradh. Humans and sages have deserted this forest due to me." Saying thus with wide open mouth, he rushed raising the axe. Ram shooting one arrow cut his hands, but Viradh maintained his movement towards them. Using another arrow, Ram cut his legs, but the demon's trunk kept coming towards them. Finally Ram cut off his head, and Viradh was dead.

Overjoyed Sita embraced Ram, and gods showered flower with the sound of celestial drums. Immediately, there came out a well clad brilliant person from the dead body of Viradh. Bowing head over ground before Ram he spoke, "I was a *vidyadhar* in my past life. Durvasa cursed me, and I became a demon. I am grateful to you for my liberation. I seek mercy upon me, and seek unflinching devotion in your lotus feet." Ram blessed him and assured him to be so. Thereafter Ram assigned him eternal abode of *paramdham* (*vaikunth*).

Reciting this sarg brings in grace of Ram, and desires of life are fulfilled.

3-2 Sharbhang and Sutikshan (41 / 87)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

After the end of Viradh, they arrived at the hermitage of the sage Sharbhang. The sage welcoming them with fruits and roots, mentioned, "I was meditating for ages over you. I offer today all my penance to you, and want to depart to *param dham*." Thereafter, meditating over Ram, Sita and Lakshaman, he entered into fire, and ended his mortal remains. Subsequently he moved to his cherished eternal abode."

Thereafter host of sages crowded the *ashram* of Sharabhang. Having seen the arrival of the sages, Ram, Sita and Lakshaman bowed their head before the sages and welcomed them. The sages chanted their glory, "Ram is *srihari*, Sita is *Lakshami*, Lakshaman is *sheshanag*, Bharat is *sankh*, and Shatrughn is *chakr* (3-2-15/16). Your advent on earth has been caused by the prayer of Brahma to end the atrocities of demons."

Thereafter, on the invitation of the sages, they continued further journey in the forest. On way when Ram was shown the skulls of sages, a proof of demons' atrocities, he vowed, "I will eliminate all the demons." Moving from one *ashram* to another, they stayed for several years (3-2-24) with the sages.

Subsequently, they arrived at the ashram of the sage Sutikshan. The sage warmly welcomed them, and recited the glory, "I am most blessed with your presence. My mediation on *ram mantra* (राम मंत्र) has appeared to bear fruits today. I am fortunate to have glimpse of your lotus feet ever cherished by Brahma and Shiv."

He further sought presence of incessant vision in his heart of Ram, Sita and Lakshaman standing before him, and he was not interested in any other form. Ram assured him to be so, and spoke, "You are sure to attain *sayujya* (सायुज्य 3-2-39) after end of your mortal remains. Now, I wish to visit your preceptor Agastya."

Sutikshan submitted to them, "Stay for tonight with me, and next morning we will go to the sage Agastya. For long I have also missed his glimpse."

Next morning, on way to the *ashram* of Agastya, they moved to the hermitage of the younger brother (*Agnijihva*) of Agastya.

3-3 Agastya (50 / 137)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

By midday they arrived at the *ashram* of the brother of Agastya. Staying there for the night, next morning they left for Agastya's hermitage. Agastya's place had a charming natural environment covered with varieties of trees and plants. Birds and animals had got a natural resort over there. The splendor of the place was marked with the *ashram* of other sages sprawled over a large area. When Ram arrived, surrounded by a large

gathering of devotees of Ram, Agastya was busy in a discourse over the significance of *ram mantra* (राम मंत्र) and *ram katha* (राम कथा).

On the advice of Ram, Sutikshan went to inform Agastya about his arrival. Coming to the sage, he prostrated and mentioned, "Ram, Sita and Lakshaman are desirous of your glimpse." Agastya advised him to hurry up, and he also rushed forward with the sages to greet them and spoke, "Ram ! Most welcome. Auspicious fortune has ushered in this rare union. I have got the dearest of the guests today."

Having seen the arrival of the sage, Ram, Sita and Lakshaman prostrated before him. The sage closely embraced Ram, and with the auspicious contact of Ram, the eyes of Agastya welled up with tears of joy. The sage held one hand of Ram and very affectionately took him inside the *ashram*. He worshipped them with full reverence and offered delicious fruits.

When Ram was alone Agastya recited his glory, "I had heard Brahma praying you near *ksheersamudr* (milky ocean), for removing the burden of earth by killing Ravan. Since then meditating upon you, I am awaiting your arrival here."

Thereafter, Agastya gave a detailed account of the expansion of the creation of the universe, "In the primordial period you are without any title. As desired by you, the force of delusion (*maya* माया) envelops you as *mula prakriti* (मूल प्रकृति) which has several synonyms of *sansriti* (संस्मृति), *avidya* (अविद्या) etc. (i.e., worldly bond). Due to your association with *mula prakriti* the creation of *mahatatv* (महत्तत्त्व the cosmic realm) takes place. The cosmic realm has all pervading three cosmic attributes (अहंकार) of *satv* (सत्त्व sublime auspiciousness), *raj* (रज worldly passion), and *tam* (तम inertial elements).

From *tam* (inertial elements) is created five senses of sound (शब्द), touch (स्पर्श), form (रूप), sap (रस), and fragrance (गंध), and these five senses cause the creation of sky (आकाश), air (वायु), fire (अग्नि), water (जल) and earth (पृथ्वी) respectively.

From *raj* (worldly passion) ten sense organs are created, while *man* (मन mind) is created from *satv* (सत्त्व). Combining them all, *hirnyagarbh* (हिरण्यगर्भ) is created in subtle form. Then *virat* (विराट cosmic person) springs up from *hirnyagarbh* (हिरण्यगर्भ). It is *virat* (विराट cosmic person) who creates the world of animates and inanimates. So the lives of beings, and lesser beings (birds etc) are pervaded with your presence. The whole show of this worldly creation is conducted by your further manifestation as three cosmic entities: (i) *Brahma* from *raj* who expands the creation, (ii) *Vishnu* from *satv* who upholds the creation, and (iii) *Rudr* from *tam* who eliminates the creation.

The potency of delusion (माया) creates *vidya* (विद्या wisdom), and *avidya* (अविद्या ignorance). Those possessing *vidya* become your devotee and those afflicted by *avidya* are lost in the worldly bonds ignoring your divinity."

The sage appreciated his fortune to have union with Ram and mentioned, “My worship to you is the sweet output of my long penance.” He then sought incessant vision of Ram and Sita in his heart and mind.

Thereafter the sage offered Ram divine weapons he had received from Indr: one bow, two ever filled quivers with arrows, and one gem carved sword. Recalling his mission of eliminating demons, he advised him to stay at *panchvati* situated on the bank of Gautami¹⁰ river, about two *yojan* away from his *ashram*. The place is rich in natural resources of trees, birds and animals.

As advised by Agastya, enjoying the natural scenes on midway, Ram moved towards the place of *panchvati*.

3-4 Panchavati (55 / 192)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

On way to *panchavati* they spotted a mountainous creature. Seeing that creature, Ram spoke, “Lakshaman! Be ready, I would soon end the life of this demon who had been eating the flesh of sages.” Hearing the words of Ram, the creature spoke, “Ram! I am friend of your father, and my name is Jatayu. Don’t kill me. I would be on guard to Sita when you and Lakshaman go to forest.”

Impressed by the sweet words of Jatayu, Ram embraced him and moved further to *panchavati*. On the bank of Gautami, at an appropriate place, situated amidst varieties of fruit bearing trees, Lakshaman raised an impressive *ashram*. Subsequently they spent their happy days enjoying the fruits and natural scene of *panchavati*. Keeping Sita in centre, everyday they used to go for bath to Gautami river. During day hours Lakshaman used to collect fragrant flowers, and delicious fruits, and at night holding bow and arrow in his hands, he used to keep vigil around the *ashram*.

One day Lakshaman expressed a query to Ram, “How does an individual attain salvation?” To answer his query, Ram explained the creation of the universe, the potency of delusion (माया), the identity of *jeev* (जीवात्मा individual soul), and *ishwar* (परमात्मा universal spirit).

‘The misconception of giving importance to body is delusion. In terms of consciousness *Jeev* and *ishwar* are synonym of each other. The consciousness of the individual’s soul is the attribute of the universal spirit. In presence of darkness, eye is not able to see anything, similarly soul is not able to visualize the eternity of *ishwar* unless he procures the torchlight of devotion. The devotion is keeping company of righteous persons, active participation in reciting of and listening to my glory, keeping fast on *ekadashi* (एकादशी, eleventh day of the fortnight 3-4-48), observe joyously the ceremony of my days of incarnation, and other pastimes etc. The salvation is union of *jeev* and *ishwar*, and this

¹⁰ Refer *sarg 5, shlok 23* Gautami and Godavari are different names of the same river.

can be facilitated through devotion. It is devotional practice which eradicates *avidya* (ignorance of the status of the self, and the universal spirit). The service to my devotees gives keeps me delighted and that leads to salvation.'

This sarg is recommended for a fond recitation.

3-5 Surpanakha (61 / 253)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Once Surpanakha, a demoness who was capable in assuming varying forms, saw Ram and was impressed by his charming physique. Lust prevailed upon her, and coming to Ram she enquired, "Who are you and why do you stay here as an ascetic? I am Surpanakha, sister of Ravan." Ram told her, "My name is Ram, and I am son of Dasarath, king of Ayodhya. She is Sita, my wife, and Lakshaman is my brother. What can I do for you?"

Surpanakha spoke, "Come on, let us enjoy our conjugal life in one of the caves. I can't stay alone leaving handsome person like you." Ram tried to reason with her, "I have a wife, and I can't have another one. I advise you to go to my brother Lakshaman. He can help you."

When Surapanakha approached Lakshaman and sought conjugal association with him without further delay, he spoke to her, "I am a servant to Ram, and if I accept you, you will also remain a maid to Ram forever. It is better, you go to him."

Surpanakha was angry, and coming to Ram, she threatened to devour Sita. As soon as she rushed towards Sita, on indications of Ram, Lakshaman cut her nose and ears with the sword. Bleeding profusely she came rushing to Khar and provoked him to eliminate two men and one woman from *panchavati*, abutting the bank of Godavari¹¹ (3-5-23). Khar, Dushan and Trishra accompanied by fourteen thousand strong demons moved to attack over Ram.

Hearing the uproar in the surrounding, Ram cautioned Lakshaman, "It seems demons are coming. Without involving into any argument with me, take Sita carefully to the nearby cave." Lakshaman obliged Ram, and Ram stood in readiness girding up his waist tightly. He equipped himself with two ever full quivers on shoulders, and bow in his hand. In the meanwhile the demons arrived and charged ferocious attack over him. He countered their charges and using his sharp arrows eliminated the entire army of demons including Khar, Dushan and Trishira in two *ghati* (i.e., one and a half hour). Observing the end of the entire demons, Lakshaman came back to Ram with Sita. Overjoyed, Sita embraced Ram, and nursed the bruises over his body.

¹¹ Godavari is another name of Gautami river.

Upset by the developments, Surpanakha came weeping to Ravan. Seeing her in pitiable state, he enquired, "Who has mutilated your ears and nose? Is he Indra, or Varun, or Kubera, or Yam, I would eliminate him in a trice."

She rebuked Ravan, "I call you a fool, because your spy system appears to have crashed, and you are not aware of the development in Janasthan (3-5-44). In a trice, Ram eliminated the entire army of Khar and has secured protection to the sages." Ravan wanted to know the details, "Who is this Ram? Narrate me the incident in full."

Surpanakha spoke to him, "Ram stays with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman, in the forest of *panchavati* on the bank of Gautami. Sita has a rare beauty. When I wanted to lift her up for you, Lakshman mutilated my ears and nose. When Khar with his army went to take revenge, Ram alone killed all of them in a trice. I don't think you would be able to face Ram, who can destroy the entire universe in half a moment. It is better to steal away his wife using your skill of sorcery."

Pacifying Surpanakha with assurances and precious gifts, Ravan entered his inner palace. He couldn't sleep at night, "I understand, Ram is *Narayan* Himself, incarnated as a human being on the prayer of Brahma. I must initiate enmity¹² with him, because it is a faster technique than compared to devotion to secure his compassion and attain liberation."

3-6 Marich (41 / 294)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Next morning, riding a chariot Ravan arrived at the other coast of the sea. It was the ashram of Marich, and he was busy in meditation. After a certain spell of time, when he was awake from his meditation, he saw Ravan. Getting up, he offered due honour to Ravan and enquired from him, "I see you arrived alone and appear to be a little agitated. What can I do for you?"

Ravan spoke to him, "King Dasarath of Ayodhya has sent his eldest son Ram with his wife Sita, and younger son Lakshman to forest. They now stay at *panchavati*. Without any reason, Ram mutilated the ears and nose of my sister Surpanakha. Subsequently he killed Khar with scores of demons. I want to abduct his wife with your help. In the guise of a charming deer, when you entice Ram and Lakshman away, I would be able to lift lonely Sita."

Marich was upset over his plan and spoke to him, "The one who has advised you this plan, is bent upon to cause your total destruction. When in childhood, Ram was guarding the sacrificial performances of Vishwamitra, his single arrow hurled me away in sea. When he arrived in Dandakaranya, to take revenge, I made a fresh bid upon his life. Having pointed horns I merged in a group of deer. Getting closer, I rushed to kill him, but

¹² विरोधबुद्धैव हरिं प्रयामि । दुतं न भक्त्या भगवान् प्रसीदते । । 3-5-61

his single arrow again took me away whirling and I fell down in sea. Thereafter, I am so much haunted by his name, that sleeping or awake I am always seized with his name. I advise you to discard your evil design and go back with a relaxed mind. I have learnt from sages that Brahma was assured by *Narayan* to kill you, and he is now here with that mission."

Ravan countered his plea, "If Ram is *Narayan*, it would fetch me salvation if I am killed by him. If I kill him, I would forever have Sita with me. If you try to scare me further in this regard, I will kill you henceforth." Marich thought quietly, "It is better to lose the life from the arrows of Ram, than to be killed by this devil. I would attain salvation, if Ram killed me."

Riding the chariot with Ravan, Marich came to the hermitage of Ram. In the guise of a charming deer he presented his deceptive movements to attract Sita's attention.

3-7 Sita abducted (66 / 360)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Ram could have a vision of the evil design of Ravan. He advised Sita, "Ravan would arrive here in the guise of a mendicant. You should now reside in fire, leaving your virtual image only in this ashram. After stay of one year in fire, when Ravan is killed you will come back to me." Sita did as advised by Ram.

Subsequently, shadow Sita could notice the movement of a charming deer. She urged upon Ram to get that deer as a playmate for her. When Ram taking his bow was about to leave the *ashram*, Lakshaman interfered, "This deceptive deer is Marich. It's no use running after him." Ram then spoke to Lakshaman, "If this is a demon, I would kill him. Else, if it is a real deer, I would fetch it for Sita. You are now to be on vigil to guard Sita, while I come back."

Marich with the magical skill of appearing and disappearing took away Ram to a distant place. *It's a great fortune of the demon that the almighty was being deceived by him and kept on toes.* After enough running around, Ram realized the deception of the demon, and he shot an arrow which ended his life. While dying Marich uttered loudly, "Hey Lakshaman! I am killed. Save me." Soon the spirit of Marich merged in Ram, and he was emancipated. Gods were surprised with the salvation of Marich and mentioned among themselves, "Marich was so much scared of Ram, that for long he used to see him all around. This caused his salvation because of unbroken brooding over Ram."

Reflecting over the last words of Marich, Ram got concerned that Lakshaman might be misguided by these words. He made a striding return towards *ashram*.

On the other hand, Sita heard the loud cry and asked Lakshaman whether he heard the call of his brother. Lakshaman tried to convince her, "This voice is not of Ram. He can't attain such a poor state in his life. He could eliminate the entire universe if he so wished. Don't worry at all about this."

Sita didn't heed to his words and made condemnable charges upon him, "If you don't listen to my advice, it means you are an agent of Bharat. You want to grab me when Ram is dead. I wouldn't live for a moment, and now I would end my life in fire."

Saying thus, she beat her breasts and wailed loudly. Lakshaman sealed his ears against her vilifying words, and invoking Sita's protection from the goddesses of the forest, left the *ashram* to locate Ram.

Finding lonely *ashram*, Ravan appeared in the form of a mendicant. Sita offered her respect, and served fruits to the mendicant. She spoke to him, "My husband would soon arrive back. Wait until he comes back. You would receive warmer greetings from him." Mendicant asked her, "Who are you, and who is your husband? What do you do here in this forest infested with demons?"

Sita spoke to him, "Dasarath was the king of Ayodhya. Ram is his eldest son. My name is Sita, and I am wife of Ram. Lakshaman is brother of Ram, and all three of us stay here in the forest under the command of father. Our term of stay is fourteen years. Tell me, who are you?"

Mendicant spoke to her, "I am a grandson of Pulastya, and son of Vishrava. My name is Ravan. I am here to take you to my kingdom. What shall you get from the ascetic? Come with me, and enjoy all the comforts in life."

Sita was a little scared; she spoke to him, "Wait for a while. My husband would be arriving soon. Jackal is trying to abduct the lioness." Ravan became angry and he manifested his real form having ten heads and twenty arms. His body was mountainous like a dark cloud. The gods and goddesses of the forest were scared seeing the terrible form of Ravan.

Using his nails, he dug the ground around Sita, and lifted her with earth over which she was standing. Placing her in his chariot, he took the sky route. Jatayu could hear the wailing of Sita from a mountain top. He rushed towards the flying chariot. Using his sharp beaks, he killed the horses, damaged the chariot of Ravan, and broke his bow into pieces. Angry Ravan cut down his wings with his sword. Putting back Sita in another chariot, he left on wind speed. Sita continued her cry, "Hey Lakshaman! forgive me for my harsh words. Hey Ram! The demon has abducted your beloved wife, save me."

While flying high in the chariot, she could spot five monkeys sitting over a mountain top. As a message for Ram, she dropped her jewels tying them in a piece of her *sari*.

Sita was finally taken across the sea. Arriving in Lanka, Ravan placed her in *ashok* grove situated on the premises of his inner palace. She was guarded by demonesses who had a motherly view towards her. Sita continued reflecting incessantly on Ram.

3-8 Wailing Ram (56 / 416)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Ram could see pale faced Lakshaman coming towards him. He thought in his mind, "Lakshaman is not aware of Sita entering into fire, and re-appearing in her virtual image. Let it be so. I have to show the beings of the world my acting like humans." Subsequently, he addressed approaching Lakshaman, "Why did you leave her alone? By now, she must have been devoured by the demons or abducted by them."

Lakshaman narrated the incident and mentioned, "I can't utter the vilifying words used by her. I was forced to leave the *ashram*." On a striding pace Ram arrived at the *ashram*, and finding no trace of her, began crying, "Sita, are you kidding with me? Come on, appear now, I am losing my patience." Having no response, he paced towards trees and enquired whether they knew about her.

Wailing Ram proceeded further in forest, and could spot the wreckage of a damaged chariot. He thought, "This is result of fight between two demons for Sita." A little ahead he spotted the mountainous creature soaked in blood. He thought, "The demon is relaxing after devouring Sita." When he asked Lakshaman for his bow to kill the demon, he heard the voice, "Ram, I am Jatayu. Ravan had taken away Sita in the south. I tried to detain him, broke his bow and chariot but he injured me with his sword. I am about to die now. I can't speak any more. I now cherish your lotus hand to be laid over my body. While dying, I see your divine presence, and this is enough for my emancipation."

Ram was shocked by this revelation, and with tears in his eyes, he moved his hands over the dying body of Jatayu, and assured him *sarupya mukti* (सारूप्य मुक्ति divine form resembling like *Vishnu*, having four hands equipped with divine icons of *chakr*, *sankha*, *gada* and *padm*) **3-8-40**.

Soon after this he dropped dead. Ram performed the last rites by setting ablaze his body over the pyre. Soon, Jatayu's mortal remains were burnt, and out of that there came out a brilliant divine form equipped with four divine icons of *Narayan*. He mounted a divine chariot, and was being attended by eternal entities of *vaikunth* of the similar form. Before his final departure to the eternal abode of *Vishnu*, he made a passionate recitation of glory to Ram. Blessed by Ram, he finally departed to *parmdham* (परम धाम eternal abode).

Glory of the *sarg*: The recitation, inscribing or listening to the prayer made by Jatayu ensures *sarupya mukti*.

3-9 Kabandh (56 / 472)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

In search of Sita, Ram and Lakshaman moved to another forest. Suddenly they realized they were moving between two long arms of a demon. The demon had a strange physique without any mouth, which was embedded in his trunk, and had no eyes or ears. The demon was known as Kabandh and used his hands to grab his food.

To tackle the peculiar situation, Lakshaman proposed to cut the hands, and while Ram cut the right hand, Lakshaman cut the left hand. Under seething pain, the demon

enquired their identity. Ram spoke, "There was a king of Ayodhya, named Dasarath. I am Ram his eldest son, and the other man is Lakshaman, my younger brother. I was here in forest with my wife Sita. Some demon has abducted her in our absence. We are moving around in search of her."

Kabandh revealed, "If you are Ram, then I have reached the end of my curse. I am a *gandharv*, and long back I had pleased Brahma who bestowed boon of immortality to me. In the pride of my youth and beauty I used to attract the attention of women towards me. Once I laughed on the ugly structure of the sage Ashtavakra. He cursed me to become a demon. When I prayed, he granted me a relief, "In *tretayug*, Ram will cause your emancipation."

While wandering as a demon, once I attacked over Indr. He hurled his bolt and my head was embedded in my trunk. Due to boon of immortality of Brahma, I couldn't die but attained a pitiable condition. He requested Ram, "Dig a ditch and burn my body. I will let you know the details about Sita."

Lakshaman prepared a ditch and putting his body in the ditch, he lit the fire. He was burnt to ashes and there came out a radiant handsome being out of the fire. Giving round to Ram, he recited his glory, "*Hirnyagarbh* (हिरण्यगर्भ) is your subtle form, and *Virat* (विराट) is your major manifestation. The Netherlands make the feet and leg; earth makes your navel, and the upper world of *svarlok* (स्वर्लोक) is your chest; *janlok* (जनलोक) and *satyalok* (सत्यलोक) make your forehead and head respectively. Sun is your eye, and moon is your mind. Aswinikumar (अश्विनीकुमार) is your nostrils. Fire makes your mouth. The rivers and mountains are the veins of your formation. *Dham* (धर्म) is your front, and *adharm* (अधर्म) is your back. Delusion (माया) is your smile, and creation (सृष्टि) is your glance."

He further mentioned, "The one who reflects upon your *virat* form attains salvation. I don't seek salvation, rather I crave for the incessant vision of your present charming form."

Ram blessed him for his emancipation and sent him to his abode where accomplished sages have found their stay.

Glory: One who recites this sarg every morning attains divine knowledge leading to my abode.

3-10 Shabari (44 / 516)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Before the liberated form of Kabandh, could mount the celestial chariot for departure, he advised Ram, "Near here, in the opposite forest, there lives a staunch devotee Shabari. She will tell you about Sita."

Crossing the deadly forest of wild animals, Ram and Lakshaman arrived at the *ashram* of Shabari. Realizing the presence of supreme divine, she got up and fell on their feet. Giving them a high pedestal, worshipped them with *arghya* (अर्घ्य) water for mouth

washing, feet washing and hand washing) and offered delicious fruits to eat. Subsequently she revealed, “My preceptor used to stay here. While departing to *Brahmlok* (ब्रह्म लोक), he asked me to stay here. My *guru* (गुरु) had told me that you had arrived to *chitrakoot*, and will pass through this route.”

She further continued that she was passionately awaiting his arrival. She mentioned, “I don’t have knowledge to recite your glory. Seeking the blessing of devotion from you, I would also end my mortal remains in fire. My *guru* couldn’t have your glimpse, but I am fortunate, I saw you today as predicted by him.”

Thereafter Ram elaborated over nine aspects of devotional affection.

- (i) Keep company of sages
- (ii) Enjoy listening and reciting my glory and *leela katha* (pastimes)
- (iii) Reflect constantly over my compassionate attributes
- (iv) Elaborate my utterances contained in scriptures
- (v) Serve *guru* with open and clean heart
- (vi) Observe the rules of my worship with *yam niyam* (यम नियम)
- (vii) Recite my name *mantr* (मंत्र)
- (viii) Revere my devotees more than me, and have vision of my presence in all the beings, restrain from external comfort and enjoyment
- (ix) Ponder over my essence of divinity

Ram assured her, “My vision and devotional affection to me is enough to bring about salvation.”

Thereafter he enquired about the location of Sita. Hearing his query, Shabari submitted in sweet words, “You are omniscient, and still you enquire from me. Sita is in Lanka. Near to my place, there is one *pampa* (पंपा) lake. Close to that lake is *rishyamuk* (ऋष्यमुक) mountain. Sugriv is a mighty monkey, and he stays at *rishyamuk* with his four ministers. He has taken a refuge over that mountain due to threat of his life from his brother Vali. Due to curse Vali can’t visit that mountain. Have friendship with Sugriv, and he will prove helpful to you.”

Thereafter, she requested him to stay for a moment until she ended her mortal remains in holy fire. In presence of Ram she entered into the holy fire and burning her mortal remains, attained the rare eternal abode.

Glory: The sarg urges upon to meditate on blue hued Ram in heart, and recite his glory with affection.

Kishkindha Kand

(9 sarg)

4-1 Sugriv (93 / 93)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

When Ram and Lakshaman arrived at *pampasar* (पंपासर) they were highly impressed by its natural resources. Spread over one kos (2 miles) of length and breadth, it has several varieties of lotus, lily, and other flowers over the water surface. The bank was lined with fruit bearing trees. Finding water as crystal clear as the heart of sages, Ram took to his fill. Later they moved along the shed of the trees.

Sugriv saw them moving towards *rishyamuk*. He asked Hanuman to go and find out whether they had been sent by Vali. Hanuman disguised as a Brahmin approached the two brothers and enquired about their identity. He also mentioned, "To me it seems, you are incarnation of *Narayan* Himself. You have come to lessen the burden of earth. You are pair of *nar* – *Narayan* (नर नारायण) who occupy the heart of the beings, and are absolute almighty."

Hearing Hanuman, Ram spoke to Lakshaman, "I am highly impressed by his skill of presentation. He appears to be a learned person." Thereafter, he spoke to Hanuman, "I am eldest son of Dasarath, and he is my younger brother Lakshaman. Honoring the words of my father, I came to stay with my wife Sita in Dandakarany (दंडकारण्य). Some demon has stolen my wife. Searching her, I have arrived here."

Saying thus, Ram enquired about his identity. Hanuman submitted, "Sugriv is the king of monkeys. He stays on this mountain with four ministers. His evil minded brother, Vali, grabbing his wife had forced him out of kingdom. I am Hanuman, one of his four ministers. My father is *Vayu*, and my mother is Anjana. I believe Sugriv can help you in searching and eliminating the abductor of Sita. You should forge friendship with him. If you deem it proper, you may proceed to him now."

Ram answered, "I have also come to see Sugriv. I am sure, becoming his friend, I will prove helpful to him." Hanuman then revealed his original form of the mighty monkey and spoke to them, "Mount my shoulders and I will take you to Sugriv." When both of them mounted his shoulder he arrived in a trice at the top of *rishyamuk* mountain. Placing them under a tree, he went to see Sugriv.

Hanuman spoke to Sugriv, "They are Ram and Lakshaman, and I have secured their friendly hands for you. Come and meet them, and forge the friendship in presence of fire god."

Sugriv very happily came to see them, and he offered Ram a branch of tree for his seat. Hanuman offered another branch to Lakshaman to take his seat. Lakshaman also gave a branch to Sugriv for his seat. When they were all well settled in their seats, Lakshaman

narrated all the incidents of forest life. This prompted Sugriv to assure, "I will find out Sita, and help you in eliminating the enemy. I have also some information in this regard. Once I was sitting with my four ministers over the mountain top. A wailing woman was being abducted by someone from sky route. Looking at us, the woman dropped a small bale of jewels to us. I had put them in the cave. I will show you now, so that you can identify them whether they belonged to Sita."

When Ram had a look at those jewels he found them to be that of Sita. Keeping them close to his chest he lamented loudly for Sita. Lakshaman consoled him, "With the help of Sugriv you will kill Ravan and soon get back Sita." Sugriva also promised, "I will kill Ravan and retrieve Sita back to you."

Immediately after this, Hanuman lit the fire, and both Ram and Sugriv embraced each other as friends in presence of the fire god. Subsequently Sugriv narrated his story to Ram.

'Once a demon called Mayavi, son, of May (मय) came challenging Vali at midnight. Vali came out and charged a heavy blow over the demon. The demon took to heels, and Vali accompanied by me, chased him. On way, the demon disappeared in a cave. Vali asked me to stay outside, and he alone entered the cave. After about a month, the stream of blood came out of the cave. I got scared, and putting a stone mass at the entry of the cave came back to Kishkindha. I was not willing, but in absence of Vali, others anointed me as king of monkeys. Subsequently, Vali arrived back, and used harsh words to me. He also thrashed me, and afraid of life I quit home, but he kept chasing me. When I mounted this mountain, because of curse he did not come here. Thus I saved my life, and he got back to his place. He grabbed my wife, and I live here immersed in sorrow.'

Sugriv mentioned, "After meeting you, today I feel great relaxation."

Hearing his story, Ram promised, "Killing the devil brother, I will retrieve your wife."

Sugriv cautioned Ram, "Vali is a great warrior, and even gods are afraid of him. I can tell you one story depicting the extent of his potential."

'One night a demon called Dundhubhi, disguised as a huge buffalo arrived in Kishkindha challenging Vali. He couldn't tolerate his challenge, and coming out of the city, he picked up the demon by its horn and thrashing over ground broke its head. He threw the dead demon to a far flung place causing spray of blood drops over the *ashram* of Matang *muni*. The sage cursed Vali, "If you come near my *ashram* of rishyamuk, your head will split into hundred pieces." Under the fear of the curse he doesn't visit this mountain.'

Narrating the story, Sugriv showed Ram the mountainous remains of the demon and enquired whether he would be able to throw that to some distance. Clearing his doubt, Ram used his toe and threw the remains to ten *yojan*. Sugriv was all praise for his potential. Thereafter he showed him seven tall palm trees. He mentioned, "Vali shakes them to the leafless state. If you can thread these trees with one arrow I would be convinced of your potential to tackle Vali successfully." Ram instantly charged one arrow

that passed through all the seven trees and piercing through the earth came back to his quiver.

Sugriv was surprised to see his potential and he recited his glory, "You are supreme divinity Himself. So long as I hadn't seen your lotus feet, I was bonded to the chain of ignorance having affection to the worldly beings and wealth. Now I seek only devotion to you, keeping your image perpetually stationed in my heart."

4-2 Vali (71 / 164)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Ram appreciated the sense of renunciation expressed by Sugriv. Encouraging him he mentioned, "At this moment, you have to perform, otherwise people will criticize me. Ram is an opportunist; he used Sugriv for his purpose, but for him he didn't do anything. Come on, go and challenge Vali."

Thus, Ram and Sugriv went to the outer grove of Kishkindha, and Sugriv defied Vali by producing a lion like roar. Hearing his roaring words, Vali came out and soon they were engaged in a fierce duel. Both the brothers were so identical that Ram got confused. Lastly, oozing blood from his mouth, Sugriv ran out of the ground, and Vali also went inside Kishkindha.

Coming to Ram Sugriv expressed his anguish, "Why did you send me to Vali? If you wish that Vali should kill me, then I would ask you to kill me." Ram pulled him close to his chest and with tears in his eyes pacified Sugriv, "You are not aware of my confusion. Both of you are so identical that I couldn't shoot the shaft to prevent the mishap of killing you instead of him. This time, go with some distinctive sign." Thereafter he asked Lakshaman to put a flower garland around his neck, and again they went to the ground of Kishkindha. Sugriv again loudly challenged Vali.

Hearing the arrival of Sugriv, Vali rushed out. On way, Tara, his wife, interfered and dissuaded him in joining the fight again with Sugriv. She said, "Sugriv has got some favorable friend, and therefore, avoid the fight with him again." Vali spoke to her, "How can I ignore the challenge of an enemy? This time I will come back after killing him."

Tara informed Vali about Ram, "Let me inform you what Angad had heard when he was out in forest. Ram and Lakshaman have arrived at *rishyamuk*. They are sons of king Dasarath of Ayodhya. On command of his father Ram had come to stay in Dandkarany with his wife Sita. Ravan has abducted Sita to Lanka. While searching Sita, they arrived here, and Sugriv pledged all supports to them. In presence of fire, Sugriv has become their friend. Ram has also vowed that he will kill Vali and make Sugriv king of Kishkindha."

She advised Vali for truce with Sugriv, "Forgetting the enmity with him, better callback Sugriv in Kishkindha and depute him as regent prince. Seek refuge in Ram, and save

your family including Angad and me.” Saying thus she fell over his feet, and with tears dissuaded him to go forward.

Vali embraced her, and spoke in sweet words, “You are seized with the delicate heart of a woman. If Ram and Lakshaman have arrived, for sure I have respect for them. I had heard it earlier that *Narayan* would arrive as Ram to eliminate the demons. If he would be there, I would invite him to Kishkindha. He is supreme god, and he loves the devotional affection. In case Sugriv is alone, I would eliminate him today. How can I move for truce when the enemy has thrown a challenge and waiting for me over battle ground.”

Pacifying Tara, Vali came out, and both were engaged again in a fierce fighting. Fighting with Vali, Sugriv had always been looking to Ram who had taken his place behind a tree. Ram pulled the string to his ear, and shot an arrow aiming at Vali. The bow pierced deep in his chest, and Vali fell over ground.

When Ram appeared before Vali, he condemned him for making an attack from a hide out. He mentioned, “I had no direct enmity with you. This sort of attempt on my life will defame you. I have heard that Ravan had abducted your wife, and expecting support from Sugriv you are here. Had you come to me, I would have brought Ravan with his entire family to you in a moment. You know that monkey’s meat is not an edible item, and therefore, what fame will you earn by killing me like a hunter? You have definitely transgressed the warrior’s code of conduct.”

Ram replied Vali, “I pick up my bow to secure righteousness. You should know that daughter, sister, wife of younger brother, and daughter-in-law have similar status in affection. You have grabbed the wife of your younger brother Sugriv, and your death is a punishment for such a crime.”

Vali was enlightened, “Accept my salutation, and forgive me for my harsh words to you. You are supreme *Narayan*, and Sita is goddess *lakshami*. At the end of my life, I seek refuge in you. I am fortunate that *Narayan* is present at the time of my ultimate departure. I seek your kind favour to my son Angad. Now move your lotus hand over my body, and take out the arrow from my chest.”

Ram accepted his request, and moving his hands over his body, he took out the arrow. The moment the arrow was taken out, Vali dropped dead.

4-3 Coronation of Sugriv (55 / 219)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Monkeys of Kishkindha rushed to Tara and informed her about the end of Vali. They advised her, “Bar all the four gates of the city, and anoint Angad as the king of monkeys.” Rejecting their advice Tara mentioned, “When Vali is gone, I don’t see any benefit in the kingdom, Angad and others.” She immediately rushed to the dead body of Vali and fell over his feet. Lamenting loudly, she could see Ram and spoke to him, “Use

the same arrow which has killed Vali, and send me to him. He can't live without me in the other world. You have experienced the pang of separation of a wife and therefore, I urge upon you to get benefited by gifting wife to Vali." Looking towards Sugriv, she spoke, "Ram has secured the kingdom of monkeys for you. Now you should enjoy the conjugal life with Ruma, your wife."

Ram intervened and spoke to her, "Why are you lamenting? You should have clear understanding of the soul and the body. The relationship is established with the body, and that body is lying before you. The consciousness which is missing from this body has merged with the individual soul. The consciousness (मन) is an outcome of previous performances, and that brings about the sense of relationship in the body. The soul is without any blemish and is totally pure. It is never born nor dead (4-3-15 न जायते न म्रियते). At the time of dissolution of the creation, the individual soul achieves the union with the almighty, and when the creation is resumed, it comes out carrying the previous imprints of *karma*. This is how it keeps revolving in the cycle of life and death. By the grace of some sage, when one gets enlightened, one understands one's own status, and attains the devotional affection to *Narayan*. Such process brings about salvation, i.e., one maintains a steadfast state and one's consciousness (मन) is made free of blemish. The complexion of soul is crystal clear, and if it reflects any colour, it is obtained by the reflection of its associated *karma*. Get up and discard the wrong notion, and take up your further performances with an enlightened mind."

Tara got enlightened, and Sugriv also attained the state of calmness. Subsequently, Ram advised Sugriv, "Take Angad with you, and perform appropriate rites for Vali." Accepting the advice of Ram, Sugriv arranged for royal funeral of Vali, and on completion of the last rites came back to Ram. He submitted to Ram, "Now this kingdom is at your disposal."

Ram spoke to Sugriv, "There is no difference between you and me. You should now go to Kishkindha, and perform your coronation as king. Angad shall be anointed as the regent prince. For fourteen years I can't visit any city, therefore, Lakshman will be present during all the royal functions."

He further mentioned to Sugriv, "During rains I shall stay here on one of the mountains. You take some break, and thereafter, commence the mission of locating Sita."

Sugriv organized all the functions in Kishkindha, in the auspicious presence of Lakshman. On completion of the coronation ceremony, Lakshman came back to Ram. Subsequently they shifted to the top of *pravarshan* mountain, and took a resort in a cave safe against rains and sun. In the close vicinity, the place had all the natural provisions of fruits, cool breeze, and palatable water.

4-4 Worship procedure (54 / 273)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Ram spent the pleasant rainy season enjoying the presence of deer and birds. Sages and gods took advantage of the opportunity of presence of Ram. Realizing him to be almighty *Narayan*, they disguised as deer and birds. Whenever Ram was available in their line of sight, they never looked away from him. They enjoyed the divine glimpse with fixed gaze at him.

Subsequently, once Ram coming out of deep meditation, found Lakshman in inquisitive mood. Lakshman mentioned, “Earlier I was benefited by your discourse on the status of individual soul. I want to learn about the worship procedure. “

Ram spoke to him, “There are several ways of offering worship. To begin with one should observe the procedure of sacred thread as enjoined in the relevant scripture applicable to that individual. Thereafter he should seek the *mantr* (मंत्र) from *guru*. Accordingly one should worship me either in his heart, or in fire, or in sun or in any deity. Alternatively, he may worship me in *shalagram*¹³ (शालग्राम).

In the morning the devotee should first purify his body by taking proper bath. At the start he should keep a water pot on his left, and the auspicious items of worship (rice, flower, sandal, etc.) on his right. He should sit over either *kush* grass mat or deer skin keeping the deity in front. Four bowls shall be used for *arghya* (अर्घ्य water for washing hand), *padya* (पादय water for washing feet), *madhupark* (मधुपर्क sweet juice), and *achamaniyam* (आचमनियम water for washing mouth).

Once the above said arrangements are made, he should commence the worship by meditating on any of my form in his heart, and subsequently he should feel his entire body pervaded by me. Following that he should worship his *guru* considering my presence in him. Thereafter he should wash the deity with water, if it is made of stone, otherwise the images may be just cleaned of dust etc. He should decorate the deity with sandal paste, and varieties of fragrant flowers. The procedure followed should be strictly as guided by his *guru*. If he worships me in fire, he should offer only oblation in the fire. If he worships me in sun, he should establish the image of sun over an altar. Offer *arghya* (अर्घ्य water for washing hand), *padya* (पादय water for washing feet), *madhupark* (मधुपर्क

¹³ *Shalagram* is a natural form of *narayan* manifested in self portrayed piece of special type of stone, obtained from the bed of *shalagram* river (*gandaki* river) in Nepal. The surrounding place to *Muktinath* (also called *Muktinarayan*) is known for availability of such a special naturally carved deity. The gateway to *Muktinath* is *Pokhara* in Nepal, and the former is about 200 km from the latter. One could use multi modal transport to travel from *Pokhara*. *Jomsom* is an intermediate place about 80 km from *Pokhara* which is easily accessible by a half an hour flight. From *Jomsom*, *Muktinath* could be traversed in a couple of days on foot, or alternatively, one can take public vehicular transport using gravel road meandering along bank of *gandaki* to arrive at *Muktinath* in about four hours.

sweet juice), and *achamaniyam* (आचमनियम water for washing mouth). If the devotee is resourceful he should offer varieties of sandals, fragrances, delicious sweet items, incense, ghee lamp, cloth and jewels etc.

This should be followed by oblation in fire reciting his *guru mantr* or *purush shukt*. The oblation may consist of sweetened rice cooked in milk. While doing oblation he should meditate on my brilliant form of *ygya purush*.

Following oblation, one should keep silence and meditate on me, and continue *jap* (जप recite *mantr* in his mind). On completion of *jap* he should offer betel and other suitable mouth freshening items. Thereafter, the devotional songs and rhythmic sound of music should be presented. He should prostrate over ground, and accept the food offered to me as my blessings and take that gladly. Finally he should prostrate before the deity mentioning ‘**protect me from this terrible world.**’ While concluding the worship he should feel satisfied that all offerings have been accepted by me.”

Glory: Ram mentioned, “Those who recite or listen to this procedure they are benefited so much so as if they have performed the properly laid out worship.”

The procedure has been termed as kriya marg (क्रिया मार्ग) by Lakshaman (4-4-8), and kriya yog (क्रिया योग) by Ram (4-4-41).

While Ram was elaborating on the worship procedure to Lakshaman, Hanuman consulted Sugriv in confidence in Kishkindha. He reminded Sugriv about his obligations to Ram, “Getting back the kingdom after end of Vali you have been totally lost in women. It seems you have no obligation to Ram, although you had committed to find out Sita promptly. In this regard, I don’t see you have taken any initiative. I understand, if you ignore your commitment, Ram will kill you as he had killed Vali.”

Sugriv got upset, and advised Hanuman to dispatch messengers to invite and gather monkeys from all quarters. He also sought their presence at Kishkindha within a fortnight. As desired by Sugriv, Hanuman immediately dispatched monkeys as messengers in all directions.

4-5 Lakshaman in Kishkindha (63 / 282)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

It was evening time after sunset. Ram recalled the sweet memory of Sita. He spoke to Lakshaman, “I wonder if Sita is alive amidst the demons. If someone informs me about her location, I would retrieve her as nectar was obtained from stirring of ocean. I understand Sugriv has forgotten his commitment and would be enjoying the wine and women.”

Hearing his sorrowful words, Lakshaman taking command of his bow and arrows reacted sharply, “I would go to Kishkindha without delay, and kill the ungrateful Sugriv.”

Ram forbade him in taking the extreme steps, "Sugriv is affectionate to me. Don't kill him. You may just terrorize him that the killer arrow of Vali is still with Ram."

Mahadev further elaborated to Parvati, "His sorrow is not real. Goddess *Lakhami* always serves Him, and how can He attain such state of sorrow! To honour His words to Brahma He assumed the human form and His pastime is to misguide the common mass. He is transcendental to delusion and bond of ignorance. Vishnu¹⁴ has Himself incarnated to familiarize people with his pastimes contained in Ramayan (4-5-20/21). His anger, sorrow, and infatuation are all to create legend for Ramayan. Only accomplished sages could comprehend His real form. He is eternal but incarnates to please His devotees.

Angry Lakshaman arrived at the gate of Kishkindha. Some monkeys on guard soon mounting over the terrace, reacted by holding stones in their hand, and produced peculiar sound. Angad heard their voice and rushing to them, he restricted the monkeys to their limits. Falling on feet of Lakshaman, he offered his respect to him. Lakshaman embraced him and asked him to intimate Sugriv about his arrival. Angad immediately rushed to Sugriv and informed about angry Lakshaman waiting outside the city. Sugriv called Hanuman and advised him to go with Angad and after pacifying Lakshaman invite him inside the royal palace. When Hanuman left to see Lakshaman, Sugriv advised Tara to greet and pacify Lakshaman by staying in one of the intermediate entries to the palace. Tara accordingly took position in the central entry and awaited the arrival of Lakshaman.

Coming with Angad, Hanuman bowed his head to Lakshaman and invited him politely inside the city, "This city belongs to you. While being in royal palace with Suriv we will attend your command as you wish us to perform." Saying thus, holding his hand, Hanuman ushered him towards the royal palace. Walking past the mansions of chief of monkeys, they entered the royal palace. On way, Tara greeted Lakshaman by offering her salutation to him. She mentioned, "For long Sugriv had been deprived of royal comforts. He has spent his time in satisfying his long felt need. You should not be angry on your devotee Sugriv. He has arranged the summon of monkeys from all quarters. One hundred million monkeys have been sent as messengers, and soon we expect arrival of monkeys from all over the globe. Sugriv himself will lead those monkeys causing end of the demons. You are welcome inside the palace and see Sugriv with his kith and kin. He will present himself today in the service of Ram."

Pacified by the sweet words of Tara, Lakshaman proceeded to the royal court of Sugriv where he saw him sitting close with his wife Ruma. On arrival of Lakshaman, scared Sugriv leapt on his feet and stood before him. Lakshaman noticed his eyes indicating his state of intoxication. He addressed him with harsh words, "O, stupid! Did you forget the

¹⁴ Out of sheer extreme devotional affection, a certain section of devotees takes *Ram* as supreme *Narayan*, superior to *Vishnu*. Such distinction may be unnecessary. It is the *satvik* attribute of *Narayan* who manifests in the form of *Vishnu*, whose sole responsibility is to uphold this creation. Incarnation of *Ram* was also to uphold the creation, and eliminate the atrocious demons.

obligations of Ram. The arrow which killed Vali awaits your ultimate departure. It seems you would become my target and follow the route of Vali.”

Hanuman interfered and advised Lakshaman to become soft, “Sugriv is in no way less devoted than you to Ram. Don’t use such harsh words to him. We see the arrival to scores of monkeys and he will initiate the mission of searching Sita today only.”

Lakshaman was down with the sweet words of Hanuman, and Sugriv offered him due respects with *arghya* and *padya*. He spoke to him, “I am a servant of Ram. He has saved my life. Arranging monkeys on mission to search out Sita is a symbolic action on my part. The real performer is Ram himself. If he wishes he could end the entire universe in a trice. He has made me worthy with his mercy upon me.”

Lakshaman apologized for his harsh words, and exhorted Sugriv to depart to Ram without any further delay. Soon they left mounting an excellent chariot accompanied by Neel, Angad, Hanuman and other monkey chiefs.

4-6 Search for Sita (84 / 366)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

When they arrived at *pravarshan* mountain, they noticed Ram in pensive mood looking towards deer and birds. Sugriv and Lakshaman got down from the chariot quite away from him. Coming to him, they prostrated over his feet. Affectionately Ram embraced Sugriv and enquiring his wellbeing gave him a seat close to himself.

In the meanwhile seeing the arrival of monkeys from all quarters, Sugriv submitted Ram, “The monkeys have began arriving. You can see how mighty and mountainous they look. Some of them have golden complexion, while others are with red face, and many of them are damp black. They have arrived from various mountains, rivers, forests and groves. They have varying potential from one elephant to one thousand elephants. They are fond of playing with mountain chunks.”

Thereafter he introduced his ministers and various chiefs, “Besides Hanuman, other chiefs are Nal, Neel, Gavay, Gavaksh, Gandhamadan, Sharabh, Maindav, Gaj, Panas, Balimukh, Dadhimukh, Sushen, Tar, and Kesari father of Hanuman. Angad is equally strong as Vali. Most of them are born from the parcel of some of the gods and they possess the strength of those gods.”

Tearful Ram embraced him, and advised him to depute them in the tough mission of locating Sita. Sugriv deputed to various quarters and in the south he dispatched Angad with the team of Jambvan, Hanuman, Nal, Sushen, Sharabh, Maind, and Dwvid and others. He set the target of one month, and warned, “Coming after the lapse of set period, and having no information about her would warrant death penalty.”

Ram beckoned Hanuman who was about to move. He gave him his ring having inscription of his name as a souvenir for Sita. He mentioned, "I am confident of your capability and this souvenir will help you in gaining her confidence in you."

Subsequently, wandering around in the *vindhya* forest, they came across a terrible demon, whom they assumed to be Ravan. When they ended his life conveniently, they guessed him to be other than Ravan. Moving from one forest to another, they arrived in a zone where for long they couldn't get water or fruits. In the meanwhile they noticed a cave camouflaged by bush and plants. They also observed water loving birds (royal swan etc.) coming out of the cave. Lead by Hanuman they entered the cave. After traversing a long and dark tunnel, they could locate an open and bright area where several ponds were found dotted with fruit laden trees. They also noticed several lonely mansions having good stores of edible items. Later, they spotted a female mendicant wearing ascetic's garb, immersed in meditation.

With great awe, they offered salutation to her. Reacting on their presence she enquired from monkeys, "Who are you, and why do you spoil this palace." Answering her query, Hanuman spoke in sweet words, "O, goddess! There had been a famous king of Ayodhya, known as Dasarath. His elder is Ram, and he under command of his father came to forest accompanied by his wife Sita and brother Lakshman. Devil Ravan has abducted his wife Sita. Searching her, Ram and Lakshman met Sugriv who has given all support to locate Sita. We have been sent by Sugriv to locate Sita. Coming to this area, we felt very thirsty and in search of water entered this cave. Would you disclose your identity? "

Pleased by his reply, she asked them to first quench their thirst and hunger. When the monkeys were satisfied, they came back to her, and she narrated her story.

Long time back Hema was the daughter of Viswakarma. She pleased Mahadev, and he gave her this vast place to stay with comfort. She stayed here thousands of years. I am Swyamprabha, daughter of *gandharv* Divya, a female friend of Hema. When Hema was leaving for Brahmalo, she advised me to stay here conducting penance. She assured me, "A time will come in *tretayug* when you will have *darshan* of Ram. He will be born as son of Dasarath. Some monkeys will come to this cave searching his wife Sita. You will treat those monkeys with reverence, and thereafter having his *darshan* you will attain the eternal abode of Vishnu."

Narrating the story she became excited to meet Ram. As advised by her, when the monkeys closed their eyes they found themselves out of the cave. She left to see Ram and coming to him had his darshan along with Lakshman and Sugriv. Giving respectful rounds to him, she offered her prayer, "I am a servant of yours. I had been engaged in penance for thousands of years. I have reaped the fruit of penance today by having glimpse of your lotus feet. A few carry the conviction that you are born to popularize the legend of your glory. Still other hold the view that you are born to bless Dasarath and Kausalya. There are devotees who take your incarnation in honour of your commitments

to Brahma for eliminating demons. I am not able to recite your glory and therefore offer my salute to you with your brother Lakshaman and your fond attendant Sugriv."

Pleased by her, Ram enquired her wishes. She submitted, "I seek your devotional affection. In whatever birth and form, I crave for your vision along with Lakshaman and Sita."

Ram granted her to be so, and mentioned, "Now go to Badrikashram and after ending your mortal remains there, you will attain my eternal abode."

Moving to Badrikashram known for scores of berry trees, she spent her days remembering Ram, and later quitting the mortal remains attained the eternal abode.

4-7 Desperate monkeys (56 / 422)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Angad was afraid of passing of one month period. He spoke to monkeys, " Sugriv will kill me because of my failure in finding Sita. It was Ram who protected me earlier, otherwise Sugriv takes me more as son of an enemy. He has immoral conducts by keeping conjugal relation with Tara, who being wife of his elder brother is equivalent to his mother. Better we should find a resort in this cave and forget about Kishkindha." Other monkeys also supported his approach.

When Hanuman overheard the monkeys talking of staying behind in the cave for fear of Sugriv, he reasoned with Angad, "Being a beloved son of Tara, why do you have any fear in your mind. Ram loves you more than Lakshaman. You have got affection of Sugriv also. Don't worry at all. When you talk of hiding in the cave, do you think it is beyond the access of the shaft of Ram."

Hanuman further confided with Angad, "Let me disclose you one very important fact. Ram is an incarnation of *Narayan*. On the prayer of Brahma, he has accepted the human form to kill Ravan. Sita is his potency of creation (*maya* माया). Lakshaman is *sheshnath* (शेषनाथ), his divine couch. All the monkeys have been created by *maya* to assist him in accomplishing his end of killing the demons. We had been his eternal attendants in his *vaikunthlok* (वैकुण्ठलोक). I had undertaken long and tough penance in the past, and consequently I was accepted as an eternal attendant in his abode. Again after serving him here, we will go back to his eternal abode. (वयं तु तपसा पूर्वमाराध्य जगतां पतिम् 4-7-20 । तेनैवानुगृहीताः स्मः पार्षदत्वमुपागताः । 4-7-21 । पुनर्वैकुण्ठमासाद्य.....4-7-22)"

Encouraging Angad, Hanuman took them to *vindhya* range, and subsequently they reached the plains of *mahendr* mountain. Having seen the vast sea they again became afraid and thought of fast unto death than to go back without any information to Sugriv. Seized by desperation, they took individual seat to keep fast.

In the meanwhile, Sampati, a vulture, moved out from his cave and had a look at those monkeys sitting on fast. He spoke, "I have got god sent food automatically. One by one I can stay on their meat for a long time." Hearing his monologue, the monkeys were further scared. They began discussing among themselves, "We have miserably failed. Neither we could do the job of Ram, nor could we please Sugriv. Now we have become a prey to this deadly vulture. The service of Jatayu is praiseworthy who ended his life for the cause of Ram. Subsequently he got *moksha* (मोक्ष) rare to be achieved by sages."

When Sampati heard about Jatayu, he became excited and spoke to monkeys, "Who are you? Discarding your fear tell me in detail about Jatayu." Hearing his query, Angad got closer to him and narrated the story, "Ram is son of Dasarath, and he came to stay in forest with his wife Sita, and brother Lakshaman. When they were out from their ashram, Ravan kidnapped Sita. On way Jatayu heard the crying Sita for help. He fought with the demon Ravan valiantly, but at the end his wings were cut by sword of Ravan. Ultimately he died when Ram met him. His rites were done by Ram and he got liberated. Later Ram became friend of Sugriv, and he killed mighty Vali. On the command of Sugriv, we have come out to locate Sita. Our target date for this task has expired, and if we go back without any information about Sita, we have threat on our life by Sugriv. We have decided to end our life of fast. If you know about Sita, you can help us."

When Sampati learnt about end of Jatayu, his eyes were full of tears. He spoke to them, "I can't help you physically but I can tell you about her. First take me to the sea shore where I can offer water tribute to my brother Jatayu."

Monkeys took him to the sea shore, and when he completed offer of water to Jatayu, he was taken back to his previous location. Subsequently he spoke to the monkeys, "On the peak of *trikut* mountain, the city of Lanka is situated. Sita has been placed in Ashok van, and she is being attended by the demonesses. The city lies about one hundred *yojan* amidst sea from here. You have to cross the sea, and then only you would be able to meet her. Being a vulture, I am capable to see the distant locations of Lanka. I don't have my wings, otherwise I could have served Ram, and would have killed Ravan, the devil killer of my brother. Someone of you has to assess your potential for crossing the sea, and meeting Sita in Lanka. Once you do this, Ram would alone kill Ravan."

4-8 Sampati (55 / 477)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Monkeys were excited to know details about Sampati. Subsequently he narrated his story to them, "It belongs to my youthful life. Jatayu, my brother and me, were proud of our potential. We thought of touching sun, and after flying above for thousands of *yojan*, Jatayu felt intense burning sensation. Using my wings, I tried to protect him. My wings were burnt, and unconscious I fell over *vindhya* but I was not able to locate the place. Subsequently, getting some strength, I crawled out and saw a hermitage. When I moved towards the hermitage, the sage Chandrma who used to stay there, spoke to me, "You

were a mighty bird, what has happened to you?” When I narrated the details, and expressed my desire to die by jumping into fire, he consoled me. The sage described the purpose of this worldly journey and about formation of this life.

‘Body and soul are not one. The bond of *karma* (कर्म) keeps tied to body if the deeds are performed for the body. Once the infatuation to the body is discarded, one is liberated and his *karma* becomes free from any tack to the body. The body centric deeds bring about auspicious results also, and one attains heaven where he enjoys the comfort, but when the store of auspiciousness is over, he drops from there to the abode of *chandr* (moon). Through the cool moon rays he is carried over to the cloud, and from there he precipitates over the crops. Through the cereals of the crops he enters the body and gets into blood and finally to the semen. Through semen he is transplanted to the womb. In the first night he is covered by a membrane, and in five nights takes the form of a tiny bubble which is converted to oval fleshy form in seven nights. In fifteen nights the blood circulation is established, and in twenty five nights mark of organs sprouts over the flesh. In about a month five organs neck, shoulder, head, spine and abdomen become visible. In two months, hands and feet, bone, loin and knees are formed. In three months the joints are shaped, and in the fourth month fingers are formed. In the fifth month nose, ears, eyes, teeth, nails, and anal are formed. In the sixth month, holes of ears, navel, and appearance of sex organs take place. In the seventh month hair over the body and head appear. In the eighth month all the organs become distinctly perceptible.’

The sage further elaborated, “In the fifth month, the still born child gains consciousness and he regains the memory of all the previous lives. He begins receiving food through the umbilical cord connecting him to his mother. When his memory of past lives is resumed, he offers a fervent prayer to lord Vishnu seeking forgiveness and blessing to attain real knowledge of the self.”

Describing thus about coming to life, the sage exhorted me to live until end of the ordained age. He had disclosed to me about the event of meeting you which took place today, “Ram’s messengers will meet you, and you will regain your wings.”

Lo and behold! Fresh and delicate wings appeared over his body. He took an excited flight reminding monkeys to make efforts for crossing the sea and meeting Sita, “The sacred name of *Narayan* is the greatest emancipator, and you all being his devotees are sure to get success in your mission.”

4-9 Self appraisal for sea crossing (29 / 506)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

When Sampati left, monkeys were excited about their mission. Angad enquired, “Is there anyone who can cross the sea and come back after meeting Sita?”

When none of them volunteered, and kept looking on each other, Angad invited each one individually to speak about one’s own potential of how far one would be able to

cross the sea. Someone mentioned one *yojan*, someone claimed for ten *yojan*, but none could feel confident of crossing hundred *yojan*.

Jambvan submitted, "In my youth, I got an opportunity to witness the measuring of universe by lord *Trivikram* (त्रिविक्रम). His one foot was as large as the earth itself. At that time I made twenty one rounds of his foot. Now I have been afflicted by the weakness of the old age, and I am not able to cross the sea."

Assessing himself, Angad mentioned, "I am sure about crossing the sea, but I am not sure about my return." Jambvan intervened, "You are the leader of the team, and we can't afford to send you to Lanka. Someone will do this. I know who will do this task."

Saying thus, Jambvan spoke to Hanuman, "Why are you quiet? You are son of *vayu*, and your birth has taken place to perform this task. When you were a nascent child, having a look at the rising sun, you jumped five hundred *yojan* taking the sun to be a ripe fruit."

Responding to Jambvan, Hanuman assumed his huge form looking as if another *Trivikram* had incarnated. He produced roaring sound of a lion and enquired, "What shall I do? Shall I kill Ravan, get back Sita with the entire Lanka, or uproot the entire trikoot mountain and place before Ram?" Jambvan advised him, "You have to simply locate Sita and inform Ram about her. The balance shall be taken care of by Ram himself."

Thereafter, Hanuman jumped over the top of *mahendr* mountain. His huge body appeared like another golden mountain. His face was reddish like rising sun, and sprawling hands resembled like the chief among snakes.

Sundar Kand

(5 sarg)

5-1 Hanuman across the sea (58 / 58)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Hanuman attracted the attention of his fellow monkeys, "See, Like the mighty shaft of Ram, now I would fly in the sky. Uttering once his name, one can cross the worldly sea. There would be no surprise if I cross the sea carrying his ring, and placing his image in my heart. I would meet Sita today only."

Saying thus, he looked upward in the south; sprawling his hands and tail up, he leaned over his feet. Soon he was up in the sky on way to Lanka. Gods wanted to test his capability of entering into Lanka, and with this intension, sent Sursa, mother of snakes to him. Coming to Hanuman on his sky route, Sursa obstructed his way. She spoke, "I am hungry for long, and gods have fixed you as my food."

He prayed her, "I am on an important mission now. Completing my assignment, and conveying the message to Ram, I would come back on my own to you, and then you can satisfy your hunger. Now clear the way, and let me proceed without delay." She didn't heed to his words and spoke, "You have to enter my mouth, thereafter you can go, otherwise, I would devour you alive."

Hanuman accepted her demand and offered himself at her disposal but he expanded his body to one *yojan*, and stood before her. Surasa then widened her mouth to five *yojan*, and in response Hanuman expanded to double of her mouth opening. When she enlarged her mouth to twenty *yojan*, he widened his body to thirty *yojan*. When Sursa extended the opening to fifty *yojan*, Hanuman assuming a tiny form, entered her mouth. Coming out quickly, he asked her to spare him on his onward journey. She was pleased with his presence of mind, and blessed him for his success.

Having seen Hanuman on an important mission, sea spoke to *mainak* (मैनाक) mountain lying low in water, "I was enlarged to the present vastness by the descendants of king *Sagar* (सगर), preceding in the heritage of Ram. Because of that I got my name *Saagar* (सागर). In obligation of that, go and provide relaxation to his messenger Hanuman."

Mainak rising up to the level of trajectory of Hanuman, spoke in human voice, "Relax for some time, take some fruits and later proceed on you mission." Hanuman spoke, "I don't have hunger until I complete the mission of Ram." Honoring his gesture, Hanuman touched the mountain top with his fingers, and continued flying onwards.

Subsequently, he felt a brake in his motion. It was due to a demoness called Simhika, who used to catch his prey by holding the shadow. Hanuman had also fallen a prey to her. Looking down he spotted the demoness over water surface. He jumped over her,

and using his legs killed her. Thereafter he resumed his sky journey and arrived at the southern shore. He had a look at the rich natural resources and varieties of fruit bearing trees. Looking towards, *trikoot* mountain and city of Lanka, he spotted ditches surrounding the high ramparts of the city. He thought it proper to enter the city at night.

Assuming tiny form, when he entered the city at night, he was detected by Lankini, the female guard – a manifestation of the city itself. She stopped his movement and trying to kick him with her legs, enquired, “O, monkey! Who are you, and why did you enter Lanka at night like a thief?” Ignoring her enquiry, he punched his left fist over her. Oozing blood from her mouth, she fell over ground. Getting up after sometime, she blessed him, “All auspiciousness to you. You have registered your victory over Lanka.

She further revealed, “Earlier Brahma had predicted that during *tretayug*, in twenty eighth cycle of *chaturyuga*, *Narayan* would incarnate as son of Dasarath, being known as Ram, and his potency *maya* would be born as daughter of Janak, called Sita. *Narayan* have granted my prayer to eliminate the atrocious demons from earth. Ram would be staying with his brother Lakshaman, and wife Sita in the forest. Ravan would steal away his wife Sita from his resort in Dandak. Later, he will have friendship with Sugriv, and one of the monkeys will meet you at night in Lanka. Ignoring your presence, when that monkey's attack would cause discomfort to you, take the veering round of imminent end of Ravan.”

She confirmed, “Your victory over me, is your victory over entire Lanka. Sita is being guarded by demonesses in the loveliest grove called *ashok vatika*, situated on the premises of inner palace of Ravan. Go and meet her sitting under a huge *shinshupa* tree, and convey soon the holy message to Ram.”

She acclaimed her luck that she got a glimpse of the devotee of Ram and mentioned, “After a long time I have resumed the memory of Ram. May Ram be pleased on me.”

When Hanuman had crossed sea and landed in Lanka, left eye and left organs of Sita and Ravan had pulsated, and on the other hand, Ram had pulsation of his right organs.

5-2 Hanuman in *ashok vatika* (58 / 116)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Tiny Hanuman kept wandering from one mansion to another. When he couldn't find Sita, he suddenly recollected the words of Lankini. He rushed towards *ashok vatika* which had excellent layout of trees and ponds with steps made of precious gems. The trees in the orchard were laden with fruits. He saw a magnificent structure supported over tall pillars. The pillars were decorated with precious stones and metals. Thereafter he spotted a huge tree of *shinshupa* densely covered with leaves, and flocked by varieties of birds. Under the tree, he found Sita surrounded by ugly demonesses. Due to continued fasting she had become skinny, her hair had turned into a single lock, and her garment had gone dirty; sitting on ground, she uttered mildly ‘Ram, Ram’.

Hanuman felt, "my good luck, I had a glimpse of Sita. The task of Ram is over." In the meanwhile he heard sweet voices approaching towards the grove. He was surprised, lo and behold! It was arrival of Ravan who had ten heads and twenty hands. Looking like cloud, he was dark pitch in complexion and was surrounded by palace women.

In fact, Ravan was anxious for his early end. He always pondered over Ram and wished his early arrival to Lanka. Getting no news from Ram, he was a little concerned. While he was asleep that night, he had a dream that a monkey messenger had arrived in ashok vatika, "The monkey has assumed tiny form, and sitting over the tree is looking at Sita." When he was awake, he took that dream to be true, and rushed to the grove with a view to terrorize Sita. His harsh treatment to Sita would be soon conveyed by that monkey to Ram, causing his expeditious arrival.

Hearing the sweet notes of the anklets of women accompanying Ravan, Sita squeezed her body and fixed her gaze down below over ground. Coming close to her, Ravan spoke, "Your ascetic husband is traceless. My messengers informed me that he was seen for some time, but now he is not seen. He has enjoyed with you, and when you are away, that ungrateful one has forgotten you. Come and stay with me, and be chief of all the palace women belonging to different races of *gandharv*, *kinnar*, *nag* and demons."

Sita was hurt by his words, and holding a blade of grass between her and Ravan, she rebuked him, "You acted like a dog stealing away the oblation items from the *ygya*. When they were absent you had abducted me, and upon such condemnable act, you falsely assume yourself a great warrior. Soon they are coming. They would either dry up the sea or raise a bridge of arrows across the sea. Their sharp shafts would cause your end as well as your sons and all the demons' forces. Thereafter, he will take me back to Ayodhya."

Enraged Ravan pulled out his sword to kill her. Mandodari interfered and dissuaded Ravan in doing so, "You have scores of charming women in the palace. You should ignore this poor human being."

Thereafter Ravan asked the demonesses, "I allow her two months. Try all your tricks of carrot and stick to bring her around in my favour. At the end of two months if she doesn't oblige me, kill her and serve her body in my breakfast."

When Ravan left, the demonesses began terrorizing her. Some of them showed her sharp weapons and threatened her to cut into pieces. Some others rushed with wide open mouths as if they would devour her alive.

Subsequently, an old demoness called Trijata came, and dissuaded them in doing so. She referred to her dream which she had seen a short while ago when she was asleep that night, and asked them to keep her pleased because she would be able to protect them in recent future. She narrated the dream, "Ram has arrived with Lakshman mounting a white *airavat* elephant. They have burnt Lanka to ashes, and killing Ravan and his sons have recovered Sita. Ram was sitting over the mountain top keeping Sita in

his lap. Vibhishan was found sitting close to his feet. Ravan along with his sons was seen having shaven head, oil smeared over his naked body, garland of skulls around his neck, and they were all taking plunge in dung tanks.” She interpreted the dream to be true, and predicted that Vibhishan would be made the king after end of Ravan.

Hearing about the dream, the demonesses got scared, and they took scattered seats away from her. While seating they slept.

Sita was alone but scared. She thought, “Tomorrow morning these demonesses would definitely devour me alive. I must end my life tonight. Finding no way out, holding a branch she wept bitterly.”

5-3 Tryst with Sita (100 / 316)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Sita was determined to end her life. She was about to try to use the lock of her hair for hanging to death, that Hanuman interfered, and coming close to her over the tree hiding behind the dense leaves, recited the legend of Ram in low pitch audible to Sita only.

‘Dasarath was king of Ayodhya. He was blessed with four sons Ram, Bharat, Lakshaman and Shatrughn. To honour his words, the eldest son Ram had come to forest with his wife Sita and brother Lakshaman. They stayed at panchavati on the bank of Gautami. Devil Ravan abducted his wife in their absence. When Ram began her search he found mortally injured Jatayu. Blessing him with salvation, he moved to *rishyamuk* and forged friendship with Sugriv. Killing his brother, Vali who had grabbed his wife, Ram made him king of monkeys of Kishkindha. Sugriv sent monkeys in all quarters to locate Sita. I am one of the monkey ministers of Sugriv. As learnt from Sampati, crossing the sea I came to Lanka, and scouring the entire city I could have a glimpse of Sita in *ashok vatika*. I have got the success, and I am really blessed one.’

Sita was upset to listen to the entire story. She thought, “It could be the droppings from wind, or be either my illusion, or dream. Is it a reality?” She was reminded of her sleeplessness in Lanka (5-3-17 निद्रा मे नास्ति दुःखेन) and therefore no question of dream. Since she listened directly from her own ears, it could never be illusion.” Reflecting thus over the dilemma of mind, she spoke, “May I see the one who has recited this sweet legend to me.”

Hanuman appeared before her in the tiny size of a bird. Sita couldn't rely on him and assumed him to be a magical form of Ravan. She kept quiet and fixing her glance at ground sat under the tree. Hanuman tried to convince her standing with folded palms before her a little away, “O, Mother! I am not that which you have assumed. I am a servant of Ram (दासोऽहं कोसलेन्द्रस्य रामस्य परमात्मनः ...5-3-23), and minister of Sugriv; I am son of vayu.¹⁵ (... वायोः पुत्रोऽहमखिलप्राणभूतस्य 5-3-24)”

¹⁵ Nowhere in Lanka, he ever uttered his name Hanuman.

Sita spoke to her, "How can I rely on friendship of a human being and a monkey?" Hanuman gave a detailed account of the episode, "Advised by Shabari, a devotee of Ram, both the brothers came searching for Sugriv near *rishyamuk*. Sugriv was scared of their arrival assuming them to be agent of Vali. He sent me to them, and I met them in the guise of a Brahmin. Winning their confidence, I appeared in my real form of a monkey. I carried them over my shoulders to Sugriv over *rishyamuk* mountain. In presence of fire, friendship was established between Ram and Sugriv. Killing Vali, Ram crowned Sugriv over the throne of Kishkindha and Sugriv got his wife Rum who was grabbed earlier by Vali."

Hanuman mentioned further, "When Sugriv dispatched monkeys in your search, Ram beckoned me and expressed his confidence in me. He gave me this ring inscribed with his name to be given to you so that you can have confidence in me as his messenger."

Saying thus, Hanuman handed over that ring to Sita and stood with folded hands away from her. She had a look at the ring, and was pleased to see his name inscribed over that. Taking the ring to her head, she streamed tears of joy.

She was confident of Hanuman to be messenger of Ram. She spoke to him, "For sure you are a trustworthy person for Ram. You have seen my pitiable condition here. If he doesn't arrive within two months I won't be found alive. Convince him for expeditious attack over Lanka." When Hanuman convinced her to be so, she expressed her doubt over the crossing of sea. Hanuman assured her, "I would carry both the brothers over my shoulder and Sugriv would cross the sea with the entire army through sky route."

Thereafter Hanuman submitted to her, "Now soon I want to go back to Ram and inform him about you. May I get some souvenir from you to convince him about my arrival here to you." Sita gave him her crest jewel and spoke, "Remind Ram about an incident in *chitrakoot*. He was sleeping in my lap. Son of Indr, disguised as a crow pecking over my sole injured it badly. When Ram was awake, he saw the injury and also saw the crow coming towards me with blood soaked beak. He shot a blade of grass invoking the potency of a weapon. The crow was chased by that grass, and afraid of his life he moved all over the universe to Brahma and all gods but none could accept his refuge. Finally he surrendered to Ram. He spared his life by damaging his left eye."

Hanuman then spoke to her, "The moment he will learn about you, he will burn the demons instantly."

Sita was a little sceptical about the capability of Hanuman. She spoke, "You are such a small monkey, how would you be able to fight with demons." Hearing her doubt, Hanuman enlarged his body to mountainous form and Sita was glad to see him. She advised him to come back to his earlier tiny form, otherwise demonesses might notice his presence here. Hanuman obliged her, and sought her permission to eat some fruits as he was feeling very hungry. On her consent, he took fruits to his fill and offering her his deep respect moved out to leave Lanka.

On mid way it occurred to him I must show the demons about my visit here and should also meet Ravan. With this aim, he damaged the grove including all structures. Only the tree providing shelter to Sita was left untouched. The demonesses woke up and enquired from Sita whether she knew about the monkey. Sita showed her ignorance and mentioned, "How could I know about the magic of demons." The demonesses informed Ravan about the monkey. He sent hundred thousand attendants to deal with the monkey. Picking up the iron pillar of the damaged grand structure of the grove, Hanuman killed all of them. Hearing about the end of the attendants, Ravan dispatched five selected chiefs of the army. They were also soon killed by Hanuman. Angry Ravan then sent seven warrior sons of his ministers. They were also killed. Thereafter, Aksh, son of Ravan came to face Hanuman. Seeing his arrival, Hanuman leapt in sky, and killed him with the iron pillar pounded against his head.

When Ravan learnt about the end of Aksha, he lost his balance and addressed Indrajeet, " I am going to see who is this monkey and bring him soon in bonds here." Indrajeet dissuaded for his coming and he himself came riding a mighty chariot. Indrajeet shot eight arrows stabbing different organs of Hanuman. Careless Hanuman, bounced heavily over his chariot, and killing the horses damaged the chariot. Soon Indrajeet rode another chariot and using the *brahmapash* (ब्रह्मपाश special weapon of Brahma) put Hanuman in fetters and produced him before Ravan.

Taking Ram's name only once, one can be released of all the worldly bonds. How can his devotee Hanuman, who constantly chants his name, could be harmed by the fetters of Indrajeet!

5-4 Lanka set ablaze (47 / 363)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Hanuman was aware that he was immune to the weapons of Brahma, therefore, his *brahmapash* after touching his body immediately made him free. For sake of fetters, he had accepted the ordinary ropes around him. While being taken to Ravan, the demons had punched bouts upon him but he tolerated them happily. Coming to Ravan, Indrajeet spoke, "I have brought him tied in *brahmpash*; he is not an ordinary monkey."

Ravan taking a look at him advised Prahast, "Find out who is he, and why has he damaged the grove as well as killed the demons?" Prahasta enquired, "Tell us the truth, I will secure your release." Hanuman looking to Ravan spoke, "As a dog steals away the oblation stuff from *ygya* altar, in similar manner you have stolen Sita from lonely *ashram* of Ram. Let it be known to you, I am messenger of Ram. He killed Vali by a single arrow and restored the crown to Sugriv. Sugriv had dispatched thousands of monkeys to locate Sita. I am one of them, and I am son of *vayu*. I have already met Sita. Due to inherent naughtiness of monkeys I damaged some of the trees. When the demons attacked over me with deadly weapons, to ensure protection of the self, they met their end. A demon named Indrajeet put me in *brahmapash*. I know about my immunity against Brahma's weapons but in symbolic bond, I preferred to be presented to you for your well being.

You are in the lineage of Pulastya and Vishrva. Your brother is *Kuber*. I understand you are not a demon. The body and soul are two different entities. Soul is without any blemish, but due to ignorance, one is mistaken to take life force, consciousness of mind and wisdom as soul. By devotion to Vishnu one is able to cut asunder the bond of ignorance and understand readily the chastity and purity of soul. Take refuge in Ram, who is incarnation of supreme almighty and get benefited by emancipation. Keeping Sita in forefront, surrender yourself to Ram accompanied by all your sons and relatives. He will forgive you for all your misdeeds.”

Hearing the words of Hanuman, Ravan became very angry, and asked the nearby attendant to kill the monkey immediately. He also mentioned, “I will kill Sita, and before killing Ram and Lakshman I will kill Sugriva also.” When the demon moved with a deadly weapon to Hanuman, Vibhishan interfered, “Messenger is never killed. If you kill him, who will convey your message to the enemy? He should be spared his life leaving some memorable mark over his body.” Ravan agreed to his plea, and commanded to burn his tail by wrapping cloths and pouring oil.

Demons did as commanded by Ravan. Setting ablaze his tail, he was taken around over the streets tied in chains. Some of the demons slapped him also on way. Later, Hanuman assuming a tiny form, jumped to the parapet of the mansions. Picking up an iron baton, he killed the demons pestering him on streets. Thereafter he jumped over all the mansions, and setting entire Lanka on fire. The city was burnt as if it was without any protector. Except the house of Vibhishan, all other houses were burnt beyond recognition. Finally he put out the fire of his tail in sea water, and came back to Sita for her permission.

Fire being friend of *vayu*, and supported further by prayer of Sita, had turned cool to Hanuman. His tail didn't have trace of any injury.

When Ram's name protects an individual against fiery afflictions, how can physical fire can injure his favourite devotee Hanuman!

5-5 Hanuman back to Ram (63 / 426)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Coming back after putting out the fire from his tail in sea water, Hanuman made three rounds of Sita. He left after offering his respectful salutation to her. He again, came back to her and assured her, “Ram and Lakshman accompanied by Sugriva and thousands of monkeys would arrive here very soon. Let there be all auspiciousness upon you.”

Sita spoke to him, “I had great encouragement and satisfaction from your presence. Now you are leaving, I don't know how to spend the days.” Hanuman submitted to her in sweet words, “O, Mother! Don't grieve. Mount my shoulders and I shall soon take you to Ram.” Sita did not agree to his proposal and advised him, “Let Ram be here with his army of monkeys and kill Ravan. That will add to his glory. I assure you that until he arrives here I will uphold my life.”

Thereafter Hanuman left again bowing to her feet. He climbed the mountain top on sea shore and took his flight to the northern shore. Under the immense pressure of his feet, the thirty *yojan* high mountain sank low to ground level. On his return journey he produced sound of joy causing the monkeys to celebrate his return. Some kissed his tail, while some embraced him closely. He narrated all what he done in Lanka, "I saw Sita, talked to her, damaged the grove of Ravan, talked to him and burnt the city of Lanka."

Without any further loss of time, they left for *pravarshan* (प्रवर्षण) mountain. On way they found *madhuvan* (मधुवन) of Sugriv, and with the permission of Anagad enjoyed the well protected fruits and honey of the special orchard of Sugriv. The guard, Dadhimukh, maternal uncle of Sugriv, made futile attempt to prevent them from entering *Madhuvan*. When monkeys entered and enjoyed the delicious fruits and honey, Dadhimukh rushed to Sugriv with a complaint against Angad and Hanuman. Sugriv could easily guess about the success in locating Sita. When he was talking to Dadhimukh, Ram overheard about arrival of Hanuman and Angad in *Madhuvan*. When enquired by Ram, Sugriv confirmed about their arrival, and asked the guard to send them immediately to him.

When the guard came back and gave the message of Sugriv, the monkeys immediately took the sky route and landed near Sugriv. Hanuman offered his respects to Sugriv and Ram, and disclosed the news, "I met Sita. She is lean and thin because of fasting. Her garment has gone dirty, and her hair has turned into a single lock. She is surrounded by dreadful demoness. I narrated to her the entire events from her abduction to friendship with Sugriv. She was confident of me as your servant, when she got your Ring. She in turn gave her crest jewel and asked me to pray you to come soon to Lanka for her liberation. She narrated the incident of *chitrakoot* when you pardoned a crow by damaging his one eye only. She wanted Lakshaman to pardon her for using harsh words against him."

Hanuman further gave account of his visit as to how he met Ravan, and burnt the city of Lanka. Ram was overjoyed to see her crest jewel brought as a souvenir by Hanuman. He expressed his obligation to Hanuman, "Come, I can offer my most precious gift to you, and this is my embraces to you." Saying thus, he embraced Hanuman close to his chest.

Mahdev was overjoyed in detailing this event to Parvati, "Even the basil leaves from His holy feet ensure the eternal abode to devotees. Since basil remains in contact with the lord, she is considered most auspicious. You can imagine the extent of benefit to Hanuman who received the contact of His holy body when He embraced him closely."

Yuddh Kand

(16 sarg)

6-1 Departure of monkey army (54 / 54)*Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.*

Ram was all praise for Hanuman. He mentioned, "Except Hanuman it is impossible for anybody else to cross one hundred *yojan* wide sea. I don't know whether anybody had performed such feat in the past, nor any body will be able to repeat this in future." He expressed concern for the army to cross the sea. Observing his anxiety about sea, Sugriv spoke to him, "The monkeys will cross the sea, there is no doubt in it."

Reflecting thus for a while, he spoke to Hanuman, "We will find some way out for this, but now tell me the layout of Lanka. I have heard that it is difficult to win Lanka because of its strategic inner layout."

As enquired by Ram, Hanuman gave details of the city layout, "The city is situated on top of trikoot. The ramparts and mansions are made of gold. There are four entry gates one in each cardinal directions. Scores of demons equipped with all sorts of weapons, chariots, elephants, horses and infantry keep watch on the entry gates. The centre of the city is also guarded heavily by strong force. The city has several tunnels, and stores of firearms. During my recent visit I have destroyed almost one fourth of the force."

Thereafter Hanuman submitted to move towards sea without any further loss of time. Ram agreed to his proposal, "The time is very auspicious. At present the period belongs to *vijay muhurt*." Setting out the procedure and pattern of movement, he advised Sugriv to move the army, "The chief of contingent will lead their contingent separately. I would mount the shoulder of Hanuman, and Lakshaman would occupy the shoulder of Angad. Other renowned warriors, viz., Gaj, Gavaksha, Gavay, Jambvan, Maind, Dwvid, Nal, Neel, Sushen, and Jambvan would watch the army from the peripheral position."

As planned the army made the move towards south. Ram and Lakshaman were in the centre, surrounded by the contingents. The route they had adopted, there was no dearth of fruits, honey, and water. Monkeys were in elated mood, and kept going leaping and jumping over each other. Without stopping on way, they continued their journey, day and night and passing through *malay* and *sahyadri* range of mountains, they arrived at the sea shore. As advised by Sugriv they laid there camp at appropriate places.

Having seen the vast sea, which looked as widely sprawled as the sky, monkeys were puzzled for future course of action. Ram was also seized with the sorrow of separation of Sita, and he lamented loudly for her.

Those who are not aware of the divinity of Ram find him in sorrowful state, but in fact, he is not at all touched by any sort of grief. Anger, grief, happiness, fear, greed and ego are

the symptoms of ignorant mind. Ram was beyond all such things, but to common man he appeared like an ordinary being lamenting for separation of wife.

6-2 Vibhishan (46 / 100)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Upset by the performances of Hanuman, Ravan called the royal court and addressed them, "I feel ashamed in discussing the performances of a monkey. Whatever he has done is beyond imagination even for gods. He entered impregnable Lanka, met inaccessible Sita, killed mighty son of Mandodari, and razed the city to ground. Thereafter he safely went back by crossing the sea. I seek your views on this issue."

The demons didn't feel any loss of prestige. They mentioned, "You have registered your victory over Indr, *Kuber*, Yam, and Varun. Considering him as a monkey, we ignored him. He took advantage of our leniency. If you permit we can move now and clear this earth of all monkeys."

Kumbhakarn spoke to Ravan, "You have committed a grievous mistake. If Ram could have seen you while stealing Sita, he would have caused your end. Fortunately, he was absent. Ram is not an ordinary human being, rather He is supreme almighty Himself. Sita is goddess Lakshmi and you have brought her for the destruction of the demons. You have taken poison, and I wonder what lies ahead of us. Anyhow I will try to help you personally as much as I can."

Hearing Kumbhakarn, Indrajeet assured Ravan, "I can go now and come back after eliminating Ram, Lakshaman, Sugriv and all the monkeys."

In the meanwhile Vibhishan arrived. Saluting Ravan he took his seat and looked around over Kumbhakarn, Indrajeet and others. With due regard to Ravan he spoke, "None of Indrajeet, Kumbhakarn, Mahodar, Kumbh, Nikumbh, Mahaparshv, and Atikaya would be able to face the shafts of Ram. You have been badly afflicted by a malefic star like Sita. I advise you that until Ram arrives here and his sharp shafts behead the demons, surrender Sita to him. It is still time, until monkeys arrive here and destroys the city with their nails and teeth, surrender Sita to Ram. Brahma and Shiv won't be able to save you against him. Even if Indr hides you in his lap, or you take refuge in netherworlds you can't escape the infallible arrows of Ram."

Ravan was greatly hurt by his words and he rebuked him, "Your life is sustained over my feedings, and you speak like an enemy. It's true that one's own kith and kin prove treacherous and cause end of the family. Had there been any other demon instead of you, by now he would have lost his life. I condemn your view. You are blemish to the family."

Vibhishan felt humiliated, and picking up his mace, he rose in the sky accompanied by four ministers. From sky he addressed Ravan, "For your wellbeing I put the fact in plain words. Ram is *Narayan* and *Sita* is *Lakshmi*. They have incarnated on the prayer of

Brahma. There is no doubt in it, he would bring about your end. To save the demon race, I now desert Lanka and seek refuge in Ram.”

Alerting Ravan once again, he deserted Lanka leaving behind all his belongings. Thereafter, he moved to meet Ram with a desire to serve his lotus feet.

6-3 Bridge across sea (87 / 187)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Coming to Ram, Vibhishan stood in the sky and submitted to him, “I am Vibhishan, younger brother of Ravan. I tried to persuade Ravan to return Sita to you, but he didn’t heed to my words. Instead, he condemned me, and threatened to end my life with his sword. I seek now refuge in your lotus feet.”

Hearing Vibhishan, Sugriv spoke to Ram, “I doubt his intention. He appears mighty, and is accompanied by four other demons. I would advise to kill him forthwith. He might prove treacherous and after killing us when we are alone, he might join back Ravan.” Ram didn’t support the view of Sugriv and mentioned, “If someone comes to me seeking refuge, I can’t disown him. He is made free from all sorts of worldly fears. I am capable of destroying the entire universe instantly, and can again create them instantly. Therefore, don’t worry, get him here to me.”

As advised by Ram, Sugriv greeted Vibhishan and brought him to Ram. After offering his respectful prostration to Ram, Vibhishan offered a passionate prayer to him and Lakshaman, “Glory to you. You are king of kings, and you enjoy the company of sacred Sita. The creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe are caused by you only. Seized by ignorance, one takes the world truly useful as if the silver is obtained sealed in a marine shell. One is engaged by your potency of *maya* and keeps rotating in the cycle of birth and death. Once your devotional affection is dawned on him, he is liberated and realizes your true form.”

When Ram enquired about his any wish, he mentioned, “I crave for constant devotion in your lotus feet and nothing more. Having seen your rare glimpse, I am most blessed today.” Ram assured him, “With peaceful mind if one remembers me, I along with Sita always stay in his heart.”

Glory: This section is most auspicious for recitation, inscription and listening.

Thereafter, Ram advised Lakshaman to arrange sea water for coronation of Vibhishan as the king of Lanka. Soon pot-full of sea water was brought and with proper consecration, Vibhishan was crowned as king of Lanka. Ram mentioned, “So long as my legend is popular, and this earth is in existence, Vibhishan will remain the king of Lanka.”

Upon coronation, Sugriv felicitated Vibhishan, “We are all servants of Ram, but you have got a special position because you sought your refuge with devotional affection only.

You should now help us in bringing about end of Ravan.” Vibhishan assured Sugriv for all possible and malice free help in this respect.

In the meanwhile, a messenger of Ravan, named Shuk had arrived over the camp and conveyed message of Ravan to Sugriv, “You are like my brother. Being king of monkeys, you have a rich heritage. I have never hurt your feeling. If I abducted the ascetic’s wife, I haven’t harmed you at all. I advise you to go back to Kishkindha with all the monkeys. It is impossible to get into Lanka.”

While Shuk was speaking thus to Sugriv, monkeys leapt up and captured him. When they wanted to kill him, he sought mercy of Ram, “A messenger is never killed.” Upon Ram’s interference he was released, and again going up in the sky, he sought Sugriv’s message for Ravan. Sugriv told him to convey to Ravan, “As I have killed my brother Vali, similarly I will bring about end of Ravan and his sons with all his army.”

Again, on the advice of Ram, Shuk was captured, and detained in the custody of the monkeys.

By this time, when Shardul, another spy of Ravan, informed him all about the developments in the camp of Ram, he got greatly upset.

Here on the northern sea shore, Ram had lost his patience awaiting the initiative from sea to extend help to him. He loaded his bow with a potential arrow and spoke thus, “Sea had not bothered so far to honour my presence here. I would teach lesson to him without any more loss of time. Drying up the sea, I would find path to Lanka.”

When he loaded the arrow, mountains and earth shook, sky was overcast with darkness. There was a terrible agitation in sea. Having realised the anger of Ram, the deity of sea appeared with lots of precious gifts to Ram. The sea submitted to him, “I am in the control of the inertial forces of your potency *maya*. I am one among five elements (earth, water, sky, wind, fire) who abide by the attributes determined by your potency. As wished by you, I would give you way to cross the sea. Protect me; I seek refuge in you.”

Ram enquired from him, “My arrow is infallible. How do I dispose it?” Sea advised him, “Shoot it in the northern direction aiming at *Drumkulya* region. The devils of this place have caused lots of harm to me.” Ram shot the arrow in that direction, and killing those devils, the arrow came back to his quiver.

Thereafter, sea disclosed about Nal, who was endowed with special skill of constructing a bridge over water. Saying thus, sea sought his permission to leave.

Subsequently Lakshama, Sugriv and Ram asked Nal to construct the bridge using stones and logs. Helped by other monkeys, one hundred *yojan* bridge was made ready by Nal.

6-4 Crossing to Lanka (56 / 243)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

When Nal commenced the construction of bridge, Ram installed *mahadev* and worshipped him calling by the name *rameshwar mahadev*. He described his glory, "If someone visits the bridge (*setubandh*), and prostrates to *rameshwar mahadev* he is liberated of the severest of sin of killing Brahmins."

Adding further to its glory he mentioned, "One should bathe here in sea, and having *darshan* of *rameshwar mahadev*, he should go to *kashi*, to fetch *ganga* water. Offering the *ganga* water of *kashi* over *rameshwar mahadev*, he should throw the pot in sea. Thus, he is bound to get salvation."

Subsequently, the construction of the bridge took place in sequential order of five days: 1st day 14 *yojan*, 2nd day 20 *yojan*, 3rd day 21 *yojan*, 4th day 22 *yojan*, 5th day 23 *yojan*. Once the bridge called *setubandh* was ready, the army of monkeys arrived at Lanka and camped near *suvel* mountain.

With a view to get an idea of Lanka, Ram mounted the shoulder of Hanuman, and Lakshaman rode the shoulder of Angad, and they together went to the top of *suvel*. From there he took a look at the high ramparts, peripheral water ditches, high mansions, and high flying flags and festoons. He also saw Ravan sitting at the topmost terrace with his ministers and courtiers. Series of royal umbrellas gave a visual delight. Ravan's grandeur was enhanced by brilliant crowns over all of his ten heads

At the same time, Shuk was released from the custody of the monkeys. He arrived to see Ravan there at the terrace top. Ravan welcomed him, "It seems you had been tortured for long by the enemy." Shuk narrated his story of the northern sea shore as to how he was captured by the monkeys. He conveyed the message of Ram to him, "Tomorrow when I will destroy the mansion of Lanka, let Ravan demonstrate his potential based on which he had abducted Sita."

Shuk mentioned two options left to Ravan, "Either fight boldly or surrender Sita to Ram." From the terrace top, he also continued introducing the chiefs of monkeys to Ravan, and those chiefs were Neel, Sharabh, Gaya, Gavaksh, Angad, Hanuman, Dwvid, Maind and many others. He gave high figures of monkeys accompanying each of the chiefs separately.

He further expressed his impression of divinity about Ram and Sita, "Ram is *Narayan* and Sita is his potency to help in creation of the universe. So long as one takes extreme interest in body and boasts himself as 'doer' and enjoyer of life, he continues in the cycle of birth and death. You have been born in a Brahmin family of Pulastya and Vishrava. You should keep away from the transitory articles of enjoyment, and conspicuous consumption. Surrendering Sita to Ram, take refuge in him, and seek eternal pleasure of his lotus feet."

6-5 Battle begun (86 / 329)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

The words of Shuk enraged Ravan, and he threatened him, "I am the provider of your bread and butter; How do you dare teach me the lessons of conduct? I would have killed you, but I spare your life reminded of your previous deeds. Stupid! Get lost."

Shuk, shaken in fear, 'haling victory to Ravan' left for his home. Shuk was a Brahmin in his previous birth. In his *vanprasth*¹⁶ stage of life he was engaged in offering oblations and performing penance for the benefit of gods and destruction of demons. A demon, named Vajradanshtr, was unhappy with him, and he wanted to teach him a lesson. Once Agastya came to Shuk and after receiving him with honour, he invited him for food. Agastya went for bath, and in the meanwhile, the demon appeared in the guise of Agastya and asked Shuk, "I want to eat the meat of a goat today." Shuk prepared accordingly the meat and when the sage arrived after bath and completed his worship, he was served food. While serving food, the demon again appeared in the guise of wife of Shuk, and served human meat in the dish. The sage could notice the unacceptable food served to him, and he cursed Shuk to become a human devouring demon. Shuk fell on his feet and sought mercy. Agasty, thereafter, through his meditation could come to know the entire plot of the demon. His anger was calmed down, but he couldn't revert his curse and assured Shuk, "When Ravan will send you as a messenger, you will have glimpse of Ram. Thereafter you will be liberated from your demon's life." Accordingly Shuk was liberated and he joined back the group of Brahmins of his *vanaprasth* group where he used to previously perform his penance.

When Shuk was out, aged Malyavan, father of Ravan's mother arrived to meet Ravan. He addressed him, "O, king! Let me inform you about occurrences of some forebodings for your consideration. After the arrival of Sita in Lanka, bad omens are noticed frequently. The cloud precipitates mix of blood. The deities in the temple are found to be perspiring and they are dislodged from their seat. Goddesses grin yellow teeth to the demons. Cows beget asses, snakes fight mongooses, and cats encounter with dogs. A black person with shaven head dares at the mansions of the demons, and many other inauspicious indications are also noticed."

Continuing his conversation, he advised Ravan, "Surrender Sita respectfully to Ram. He is not an ordinary human. He is *Narayan* himself, and sages cross this worldly ocean serving his louts feet. Although your conducts are not appropriate, if you place him with affection in your heart, he will have compassion on you, and you will be able to save your family."

Ravan got worked up with the words of Malyavan, and he spoke, "I don't see anything special in Ram. He has been exiled by his father and is friendly to innocent sages of the forest. Taking support of monkeys he has arrived here. In future don't tell me such things. Considering your honourable relationship, and elderly age, I ignore what you said." Saying thus he began discussing about strategy of battle with his ministers.

¹⁶ There are four stages of life: *brahmchari* (ब्रह्मचारी) student life, *grihasth* (गृहस्थ) married life, *vanprasth* (वानप्रस्थ) post house hold life, and *sanyas* (संन्यास) renunciation.

On the other hand, Ram noticed Ravan surrounded by his ministers. He charged one arrow which cut down the umbrellas over the terrace, and all the crowns from his heads were swept away. Ashamed and upset over the incident, Ravan withdrew inside his palace. He called Prahast and commanded him to begin the battle forthwith.

Demons riding varieties of mounts of chariots, horses, camels, asses, buffalos, lions and tigers etc came to the main gates. They were equipped with all sorts of weapons of swords, batons, maces, bows, spears etc. Monkeys also arrived, holding rock masses and trees creating uproarious sound of, "Victory to Ram, Lakshaman, and Sugriv." Fierce fighting took place causing major loss to the demons. Hardly one fourth of their strength survived.

Meghanad was a great magician. He used *brahmasht* and caused huge casualty of monkeys. Ram was enraged to see the wanton loss of lives of monkeys. He asked Lakshaman to bring his bow so that he could charge *brahmasht* to counter the attack of Meghanad. Sensing his wrathful mood, Meghanad disappeared from the battle ground.

Having seen the huge casualty of monkeys, Ram advised Hanuman to go to *ksheersagar* (क्षीरसागर) and bring from there *dronachal* (द्रोणाचल) mountain which possessed live saving herbs. Hanuman acted as advised and the dead monkeys were revived back to their life. Hanuman, later, placed back the herbal mountain to its original location.

When the monkeys were revived, they produced great uproars to retaliate with demons. Ravan learnt with surprise about the revival of the monkeys. He commanded all his chiefs to take the position over the battle ground. Mahodar, Atikaya, Prahast, Kumbh, Nikumbh, Manad, Devshatru, Devantak, Narantak and other arrived with their contingents to face the monkeys. All these demons fell prey, one after another, to either Ram, or Lakshaman, or Hanuman, or Sugriv, or Angad or other chiefs of the monkey army. At one hand, due to the glance of *Vishnu* (6-5-62 in the incarnation of Ram), monkeys who were representatives of various gods were emboldened and strengthened; on the other hand, the sin of abduction of Sita, eroded substantially the strength of demons.

6-6 Ram humiliated Ravan (63 / 382)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Having heard the fall of all his valiant warriors, Ravan himself came to take the command over the battlefield. For protection of Lanka he had deputed Meghand back in the city. Riding an excellent chariot he had arrived over the battle field. Sugriv and other monkey chiefs were humiliated in his initial performances over the ground. Coming ahead, he noticed Vibhishan holding a mace. To take revenge, Ravan shot a potential *shakti* (शक्ति) over him, which he had been gifted earlier by a demon called *maya* (मय). Lakshaman could sense the gravity of the weapon, and he suddenly came to the front hiding Vibhishan on his back. Shakti entered deep in his chest and he fell over ground. Ravan tried in vain to lift Lakshaman to keep him in his custody. Hanuman noticed his

mischievous, and rushing to the spot he punched a severe blow to Ravan. The demon fell over his knees, and getting grievously hurt he retired in the rear of his chariot. Subsequently Hanuman lifted unconscious Lakshaman and brought him to Ram. Sensing Lakshaman as incarnation of *Narayan*, *shakti* had deserted him, but he was lying down observing the human discipline.

In the meanwhile Ravan recovered from spell of fit, and drove his chariot to Ram. Having seen the arrival of Ravan, Ram mounted the shoulder of Hanuman and moved forward to face him. Ram warned him, "Hold for a moment, I will kill you using the same shaft which I had used to kill the demons in Janasthan."

Ravan showering arrows over him, injured Hanuman, but Hanuman stayed firm holding him over his shoulder. Enraged Ram, shot sharp shafts and destroyed the chariot of the demon, killed the horses and charioteer. He cut his bow to pieces and swept away the crowns from his heads. Ravan with bare heads, was standing on ground; he had lost his chariot as well as his weapons. Ram spared his life mentioning, "Go and relax today. Come later."

Humiliated Ravan returned back to Lanka. On the other hand, coming back to Lakshaman, Ram was gripped in sorrow. Ram asked Hanuman to fetch again the herb of *dronachal*. To comply his command, Hanuman left on a whirl wind speed.

When the spies of Ravan informed him about the departure of Hanuman to *ksheersagar* for getting life saving herb for Lakshaman, he instantly came to a demon called Kalanemi who was known for his sorcery. Ravan spoke to him, "To revive the unconscious Lakshaman, Hanuman has gone to bring herb from *dronachal*. You need to delay him in his mission. In the guise of a sage, make one *ashram* on way to *ksheersaga*, and keep engaged Hanuman for a long time. When over delayed, the herb will prove ineffective, and Lakshaman would not recover at all."

Hearing patiently Ravan, the demon Kalanemi spoke to him, "With due honour, I venture to submit something. I will do what you command, and if required I would sacrifice my life for your cause. I know I am going to meet the same fate which Marich had met in Danakarnya. You have lost your valiant sons and close associates. But at this stage, let me remind you about the futility of this exercise. What will you gain now by keeping Sita? Better surrender her to Ram, and crown Vibhishan as the king; retire to any *ashram* for seeking peace in your life. Whatever is perceived by this body and the sense organs is known as *prakriti* or *maya*. Soul is independent of *prakriti*; ensnared by the body senses one loses the clear sight of the blemish-free soul. Detach the soul from the performances of the body and enjoy the real liberation. If you can't do this, meditate in your heart the presence of a multi-petal lotus. Place charming Ram and Sita over that lotus. Imagine Ram is dressed with all divine insignia, and Lakshaman stands on his side with two bows in his hand (one of Ram, and the other his own; **6-6-60 लक्ष्मणेन धनुर्द्ध वद्धकरणेन परिसेवितम्**). If you meditate on this form of the almighty who is upholder of the soul, you will, for sure, attain salvation."

6-7 Lakshaman revived (70 / 452)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Hot *ghee*¹⁷ (घी) produces a noise when cold water drops into it. Similarly hearing the instructive words of Kalanemi, Ravan spoke with anger to him, "It seems your death is ordained by my hands. You are talking as an agent of Ram." Surrendering to him, Kalanemi left immediately, and arriving at a place falling en route to Hanuman's destination, produced one *ashram* by magic and he became a sage in disguise. When Hanuman flew past the place, he was surprised to see a new *ashram* because in his previous trip no such *ashram* was noticed. He was in a dilemma whether he lost his way.

Having a wish to see the sage and drink water, he entered the *ashram*. The demon, disguised as a sage was surrounded by disciples, and was busy in the worship an idol of Shiv. Paying his respect to the sage, Hanuman spoke to him, "I am a devotee of Ram; my name is Hanuman. On an important mission of Ram, I am on way to *ksheersagar*. I am thirsty, and looking for water."

The demon offered his water pot to quench his thirst, and said, "Take some fruits also, and relax for some time. There is no concern for haste. I can see the past, the present, and the future. Lakshaman and other monkeys have regained consciousness by graceful glance of Ram." Hanuman wanted some more water and enquired for a pond. The demon asked his disciple to show him the pond, and advised Hanuman, "When you are taking water in the pond, keep your eyes closed. Thereafter come back to me, and I will impart one *mantra* to you to help identify the herb at *dronachal*."

Having his eyes closed, when Hanuman began drinking water, a crocodile made an attempt to swallow him. With his left hand, he tore apart the mouth of the crocodile which instantly caused its death. A radiant woman appearing in the sky, spoke to Hanuman, "I am Dhanyamali, a celestial dancer, and due to curse of a sage had become a crocodile. You have liberated me, and I am proceeding to *brahmlok*. Be careful, this sage in disguise is a demon. Killing him, proceed quickly to *dronachal*."

When Hanuman was back to the *ashram*, the demon spoke to him, "Don't delay, receive the *mantr* and pay my gift." Saying, 'receive your gift first', Hanuman punched a blow over him. The demon discarded his magical guise, and in real demon form commenced encounter with Hanuman. Soon, a pounding blow of

¹⁷ clarified butter

Hanuman fell over his head, and he was dead. Hanuman proceeded fast to *ksheesagar*, and arrived at *dronachal*, but he was not able to see the herb. Uprooting the entire mountain, he brought and placed before Ram, “use it as you wish”. Taking the medicinal herb, Ram asked Sushen to treat Lakshaman. Soon Lakshaman regained his consciousness as if he was awakened from the sleep. Getting up, he shouted, “Where is Ravan, I will kill him.” Ram pulled him in his lap, and taking smell of his head, expressed his obligation to Hanuman, “Because of you, Lakshaman has been revived to life today.” Thereafter, with Sugriv and Vibhishan, he began planning for the coming course of actions over the battle ground.

There in Lanka, upset over his humiliation, Ravan was nursing the injuries of shafts. He spoke to the fellow demons, “Brahma had predicted my end from the hand of a human being. I don’t see any human being of that calibre to kill me, but Ram appears to be an incarnation of *Narayan* Himself. The curse of Anarnya, a king of *Ikshavaku* dynasty, that a person of his lineage will kill me, also appears to be true now. For sure, Ram will cause my end.”

Thereafter, Ravan expressed his annoyance over Kumbhakarn, “He is a great fool, and is always found sleeping.” He asked the demons to go and awake him. Accordingly, with great effort, the demon was awakened. Coming to Ravan, he offered his respect, and took a seat. Subsequently, Ravan addressed him, “Kumbhakarn! I am facing a tough time now. All great warriors, sons, and grandsons have been killed by Ram and his associates. Help you brother, and kill the enemy.”

Hearing the pitiable words of Ravan, Kumbhakarn laughed thunderously, and spoke to him, “In the previous meeting I had forewarned you, but you didn’t heed to my words. Ram is *Narayan*, and Sita is his potency (*yogmaya* योगमाया).”

Kumbhakarn narrated one incident.

‘Once, I was sitting over a rock mass, and Narad happened to pass that way. When I enquired from the sage about anything new, he revealed, “I am coming from a secret meeting of gods. Agonized by the atrocities of both of you brothers, gods had appealed to Vishnu recalling the prediction of Brahma that both of them could be killed by a human being. Assuring them, *Vishnu* had incarnated as Ram in Ayodhya. He will kill both of you.” Saying thus, the sage disappeared.’

Kumbhakarn, thereafter, counselled Ravan, “Take Ram as supreme almighty, and seek refuge in him with devotional affection. It is said, devotion is the mother of knowledge, and readily fetches liberation. There have been several incarnations of *Vishnu* in the past, but this one as Ram is equivalent to his

thousands of previous incarnations, and is an epitome of absolute auspiciousness. One who holds his charming image in his heart is bound to attain the eternal abode of almighty god. Those who recite the glory of Ram are blessed with the auspicious shelter in His lotus feet.”

6-8 Kumbhakarn (68 / 520)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Such words of Kumbhakarn, were enough to enrage Ravan. Reacting sharply, he asked Kumbhakarn, “I didn’t call you to impart me lessons of conduct. If you can’t fight, relax and enjoy your sleep.”

Surrendering to the wrathful mood of Ravan, he moved towards the battle ground. Stepping over the ramparts, he lashed like a storm over the monkeys and began crushing them under his feet. Having seen a peculiar creature occupying the battle ground, the monkeys took to their heels.

In the meanwhile, Vibhishan holding a mace in his hand came to Kumbhakarn, and offering his respect, spoke to him, “I tried my best with Ravan to surrender Sita, but he didn’t listen. Instead, he humiliated me by his kicks, and threatened with his sword. Thereafter, I took refuge in the holy feet of Ram. He is *Narayan* incarnate.” Kumbhakarn praised his initiative, “Brahma had told that you will be a great devotee. I am proud of you for you will auger auspiciousness to the demon dynasty.” Subsequently he advised Vibhishan to clear his way for he was intoxicated to fight only.

When Ram noticed heavy casualty of monkeys, he shot a shaft cutting down his right arm. The arm holding a baton, when touched the ground, it smashed scores of monkeys to death. In retaliation, Kumbhakarn rushed to Ram holding a huge tree in his left hand. When that hand was also cut down by an arrow of Ram, the armless demon rushed towards him. Soon, Ram cut down his legs and dropped them at the gate of Lanka. The dreadful demon didn’t lose his spirit, and rushed with wide open mouth to devour Ram. Immediately, his mouth was filled with arrows, and another arrow severed his head off his body. The body was dropped in sea with a great splash and caused end of several marine creatures. The head with earrings was dropped on one of the gates of Lanka blocking the gate for any entry. .

Subsequently Narad arrived and recited glory to Ram, “O, almighty! My numerous salutations to you!. You are supreme spirit, and the entire universe is manifested as your sheer attributes. The winking of your eyes causes the cycle of creation and destruction of the universe. The greed and passion intimidate a

being as if a cat deters a rat. Those who recite your glory, hold your image in heart, and nourish devotional affection to you, cross this world as if he had stepped over a mark created by the cow-hoof. Today's killing of Kumbhakarn was a part of your vow. After this, Meghanad will meet his end on the hands of Lakshaman, and next to that Ravan will be killed by you. With gods, I would also witness your game of ending the life of Ravan. That will complete your vow to the gods." Submitting thus, Narada sought his permission and left for *brahmlok*.

There in Lanka, Ravan was immersed in sorrow over the death of Kumbhakarn. Consoling Ravan, Meghanad assured him that he will take revenge of killing of his uncle. For this he proposed to seek a chariot and weapons as blessings from *nikumbhila*. Saying thus, he entered the cave, and commenced the oblation to goddess *nikumbhila*. He was dressed in a red wrapper, and wearing a red flower garland, he was having red paste of sandal smeared over his body.

Vibhishan came to know about commencement of his *nikumbhila* oblation. He sought permission of Ram to send Lakshaman to obstruct the fulfilment of the mission of Meghanad. Ram volunteered himself for this task, but Vibhishan submitted, "As I understand, only Lakshaman could do this. Meghanad had a boon that his killer would be one who neither slept nor ate anything for twelve years. Lakshaman readily satisfies both the conditions, therefore allow him to proceed with me to end the life of Meghanad."

Vibhishan further recited the glory, "Lakshaman is an incarnation of *sheshnath* (शेषनाथ the divine snake, providing holy couch to recumbent *Narayan*, and upholder of earth), and you are *Narayan* himself. Both of you have incarnated to end the atrocities of the earth."

6-9 Meghanad (68 / 588)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Ram consented to the proposal of Vibhishan and mentioned, "I am aware of the complexities of the task of killing a warrior like Meghanad. I am also aware of the sacrifices of Lakshaman which he had been able to make because of unqualified service to me." Having all pros and cons in view, he advised Lakshaman to proceed immediately with Vibhishan, Hanuman, Angad and Jambvan along with their respective army. Lakshaman made a round of Ram, and with reverential salutation left happily on his mission to eliminate Meghanad.

Arriving at the scene, they noticed the presence of huge army of demons. Vibhishan encouraged them to attack over the demons who had cordoned Meghanad. In the fierce fighting, demons suffered huge casualty. Meghanad

couldn't tolerate that any more, and leaving the oblation mission incomplete, he came out and mounted his chariot. Having seen Vibhishan, he condemned his activities, "You were born and brought up in Lanka. How did you accept the service of the enemy? I am like your son, why did you become inimical to me."

Subsequently he engaged himself with Lakshaman who was carried over the shoulder of Hanuman. Lakshaman caused a spell of fit to him, when he shot him with a singly potential shaft. He also broke lose his shield from his chest. Retaliating to Lakshaman, Meghanad showered scores of shafts, and injured Hanuman, and broke the shield of Lakshaman as well.

Shooting arrows, Lakshaman destroyed his chariot, killed the horses with the charioteer. Swiftly he cut down his bows twice in succession. Soon after that he loaded an arrow, and invoking the potential of Ram, 'If Ram has been pious, holy and chaste, let this arrow end the life of Meghanad' shot the arrow aiming end of Meghanad.

Lo and Behold! That arrow beheaded Meghanad. Gods including *Indr* were overjoyed in heaven. They sounded kettle drums and showered flowers over Lakshaman. The earth felt greatly relieved, and the sky had become bright and clear.

Monkeys celebrated the victory with uproars, and Lakshaman produced the victory sound from a conch.

They came hurriedly to Ram, and informed him about the end of Meghanad. Embracing Lakshaman, Ram sniffed his head as a mark of deep affection to him and praised his valour, "I am proud of you that you fought three nights and three days with the deadly demon. Now I have no enemy. Shocked by the loss of his son, Ravan will come over battle ground, and I would easily end his life."

When Ravan learnt about the end of Meghanad, he fell unconscious over ground. Mourning Meghanad's death with loud lamentation, he passed through several spells of fit. Subsequently, he thought of killing Sita. Taking sword in his hand he rushed towards her. Sita was frightened with this scene, but Suparsv, a minister to Ravan, interfered and pacified Ravan, "You are younger brother of *Kuber*, and you have studied deeply the scriptures; besides you have performed several *ygya*. It is not proper to kill a woman. Tomorrow, fighting Ram, we will register our victory and possess Sita forever." Ravan was calmed down, and he withdrew to his palace. Next morning he called a meeting of the royal court.

6-10 Mandodari (61 / 649)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

As moths keep on jumping into fire flame, the balance demons accompanied by Ravan came to the battle ground. Injured grievously by the arrows of Ram, again Ravan retreated back to Lanka.

To take revenge of heavy casualties, Ravan approached Shukracharya, the preceptor of demons. He sought his guidance, "Do something to save the demons dynasty. All my sons and friends have been killed by Ram." Shukracharya advised him, "At a lonely place, conduct a special oblation in fire which if performed successfully will fetch you a chariot, horses, bow and quiver full of arrows. This will make you invincible."

As advised, Ravan prepared a special deep underground basement under his palace. Keeping all the entries to the city fully barred, he commenced the oblation. When Vibhishan noticed thick rising smoke, he advised Ram, "Ravan has commenced a special oblation in fire. If conducted successfully, he will become invincible. Let us frustrate his initiative." Ram agreed to his proposal and a special contingent was sent to disturb Ravan.

Crossing over the ramparts, the monkeys lead by Hanuman and Anagad entered Lanka. Whole night fierce fighting continued inside the city with the demons. Lastly, Sarama, wife of Vibhishan hinted the monkeys about the venue of Ravan's special worship. Monkeys entered the basement and found Ravan busy in the worship with closed eyes. Hanuman snatched the ladle he was using for oblation, but he didn't yield, and continued his worship.

In the meanwhile Angad, dragged Mandodari to the venue and in this process her clothes had become loose, and jewels fell over ground. Other monkeys similarly dragged other wives of Ravan to the basement. Mandodari cried for help, "What is the benefit of this worship, if monkeys have humiliated us. Had my son, Meghanad been alive today, I couldn't have experienced such humiliation." She rebuked Ravan in many ways, and that caused Ravan to leave the initiative incomplete. Taking sword in his hand, he chased the monkeys. Thus spoiling the oblation stuff, monkeys came back to Ram.

Ravan, later consoled Mandodari, "The sorrow and happiness are product of ignorance. Discard attachment to this body and secure knowledge to forgo body centric ego. You will be free from all sorrow. Tomorrow I will end the lives of Ram and Lakshman. To the contrary, if I die over the battle ground, I would attain salvation. I seek one help from you. When you rise to my pyre, take Sita also with you."

Mandodari counselled him, "You can never win Ram. He is the creator of *purush* (पुरुष) and *prakriti* (प्रकृति). In the primordial days, he saved *vavisvat manu* (वैवस्वत मनु) in the guise of a fish (मत्स्य). He was the huge tortoise (कच्छप) spread over hundred thousand *yojan* to lend firm support to *mandarachal* during ocean stirring. He killed *Hirnyaksha* in the form

of a boar (वराह) and retrieved the earth. Hirnyakashipu was eliminated by him when he appeared as *nrusimha* (नृसिंह). As *vaman* (वामन), he measured the entire universe by his three steps, and handed over the universe to *Indr*. When *kshatriya* had become demonic he came as Prashuram (प्रशुराम), and killing them several times, he grabbed the domain of earth and surrendered to Kashyap. Now in the form of Ram, he is here to eliminate you with your sons and relatives. You have still time to save yourself. Surrender Sita to him, and crown Vibhishan as the king of Lanka. Thereafter we will retire in forest.”

Ravan didn't agree to her proposal, “After causing end of lives of all my sons, brothers and friends, how can I lead a life of an ascetic!” He further mentioned, “I know Ram is *Vishnu*, and Sita is *Lakshmi*. I have determined to sacrifice my life to his arrows. This will fetch me His eternal abode, and I would be able to cross the worldly ocean conveniently.” He portrayed the worldly ocean comprising of tides of troubles, whirlpools of dilemma, fish of wife, sons and relatives, heat of anger, and interwoven cobweb of passion.

6-11 Ravan (88 / 737)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Next day, Ravan riding a huge chariot having sixteen wheels and pulled by big asses arrived over the battle ground. He was surrounded by demons, and his appearance was so terrible that at first sight monkeys were frightened. Fierce fighting took place and scores of monkeys lost their lives. When Ram moved to face ferocious Ravan, he maintained showers of arrows over him. *Indr* felt uncomfortable when bare footed Ram faced Ravan. He sent his chariot to the service of Ram, which was being driven by *Matali*, and pulled by green horses. Coming to Ram, *Matali* requested him, “O, Lord! This chariot is sent by *Indr* for your use. It has celestial a bow, a sword and one quiver full of arrows.” Ram accepted this offer, and giving a round, mounted the chariot.

Thereafter the battle took a deadly turn. Ravan showered snakes over the monkeys and Ram used *garud* to counter them. Subsequently Ravan cut down the flag of Ram's chariot and injured the horses also. His arrows caused grievous injuries to Ram. Gods and sages watching the battle from the sky were grieved over the condition of Ram. Monkeys also felt miserable over his prevailing status.

Subsequently, Ram showed his anger, and shot a deadly shaft which kept cutting the heads of Ravan. The sky was covered with only heads and heads of Ravan but still new heads kept sprouting. Vibhishan, in the meanwhile, revealed to Ram, “He has a boon of Brahma; he will not die by cutting his heads and hands. They will keep on being renewed. He is blessed with ambrosia in his navel.”

Subsequently Ram shot another shaft to dry up the ambrosia of his navel, and that caused a dramatic turn in the scene. Ravan lost all his heads and hands, except one head and two hands. He almost looked squeezed to a null.

To take revenge from Vibhishan, Ravan shot a potential *shakti* over him, but Ram countered that on midway. In the meanwhile, *Matali* advised Ram, “He will not die by cutting of his head. As indicated by gods, his end time is close. You have to strike over his chest. Accordingly, Ram shot an arrow, which piercing deep through his chest brought an end to his life. He lost grip of his bow, and his body fell down over ground from his chariot.

Gods showered flowers and produced notes of celestial music. The dancing girl of the heaven performed happily in the sky. Sages, *siddha* and *charan* recited his divine glory.

In presence of all, a brilliant light emerged from the body of Ravan and merged in Ram. Gods were surprised to see such a high level of liberation to Ravan. Narad explained the cause to gods, “As an adversary, Ravan had constantly thought over Ram, and thus he had brought himself quite close to Ram.”

Glory: ‘Ram standing over feet, held the bow upright in his left hand resting its one end over the ground, and continued rotating an arrow from his right hand. His body glowed with radiant bruises of arrows, as if numerous suns shine over him, the corners of his eyes are redshot, who is glorified by Indr for his victory’. May Ram protect me!

6-12 Sita entered fire (84 / 821)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

The mission of ending demons was over. Ram expressed his gratitude to Sugriv, Jambvan, Lakshaman, Vibhishan, Hanumana, Angad and others. He mentioned, “So long earth exists, your performances shall be remembered with reverence.”

Saying thus when he looked to the battle ground, he found Mandodari and other women of the palace lamenting over the dead body of Ravan. Vibhishan also getting closer to them mourned the death of his elder brother. While doing so, he got immersed in shock so much so that he fell unconscious over the ground.

Ram, then advised Lakshaman to console Vibhishan and encourage him for performing last rites of Ravan. He also mentioned to convey to Vibhishan to return the women to the palace. Lakshaman, accordingly went close to Vibhishan and tried to pacify him, “This is not the time to lament. Nobody in this world has any permanent relation. Relations are like gathering of shifting sands due to flow of water. The sons, brothers and wives are like seeds. A seed is destroyed after generating several seeds. Similarly family and relations are generated like seeds at the cost of the parental seeds. This is how this world proliferates. The self (or soul) doesn’t have any relations nor is involved in generating any one. This happens because of the deeds and attachment to the deeds.”

He further advised him to take up the activities of last rites of Ravan. Vibhishan was consoled and coming to Ram he spoke, “Ravan was a great sinner and was involved in several immoral conducts. I can’t perform his last rites.” Ram exhorted him to forget his

past deeds, “After death what he is to me, same he is to you also. His last rites has to be performed according to the family tradition.”

As advised by Ram, Vibhishan arranged the last rites of Ravan as per family tradition, and after offering oblation of water and sesame, he sent back the women to the palace. Thereafter he came back to Ram.

In the meanwhile Ram released *Matali* who had come with the celestial chariot, and accordingly *Matali* went back to his original abode.

Addressing Lakshaman, Ram mentioned, “Although we had previously consecrated Vibhishan as the king, it should be performed again at the palace of Lanka, with full scriptural procedures.” Lakshaman along with fellow monkeys went to Lanka and performed the consecration of Vibhishan with water of sacred places. When Vibhishan was crowned king, he came to Ram with lots of gifts carried by the citizens of Lanka. He gave rounds to Ram and offered the gifts to him. Ram accepted the gifts, and congratulated Vibhishan.

Thereafter Ram embraced Sugrv and said, “With your support, we have emerged victorious and Vibhishan has been made the king of Lanka.” Looking to Hanuman who was standing beside him, Ram said, “With the consent of Vibhishan, go and inform Sita about the end of Ravan. Come back soon with her message.”

Accordingly, Hanuman was taken inside Lanka with great honour. He came to *ashok vatika* and found Sita, sitting under the *shinshupa* tree surrounded by demonesses. She was quiet and constantly meditating over Ram. He offered his respectful salutation to her, and stood on one side. Initially Sita didn't respond, but when she recollected Hanuman, her face beamed with pleasure and she had a look at him. Hanuman, then spoke to her, “O, Goddess! Ram, who has been assisted by Vibhishan, Lakshaman, Sugriv and others, is well. He has killed Ravan, his sons and his army. Vibhishan has been made the king of Lanka. He has sent me with the news of his wellbeing to you.”

Responding to Hanuman, Sita said, “I don't find any precious gift worth your obligations.” Hanuman expressed his satisfaction, “After the end of the enemy, when I get the glimpse of Ram, that is the most blessed reward to me.”

Sita praised his qualities, “I am happy to learn that all the auspicious qualities abide in you. With the permission of Ram, I want to have his *darshan* (glimpse).”

Bidding his salutation to her, Hanuman came back to Ram and conveyed her message, “She had sought your permission for your *darshan* (दर्शन glimpse).”

Accordingly, Ram asked Vibhishan, “Let Sita be brought here fully refreshed with bath and dressed with new clothes and jewels.” Responding his desire, Vibhishan immediately left with Hanuman and asked the elderly women to bathe Sita, and dress her in new clothes and jewels.”

Getting her ready, she was carried in a fully decorated royal palanquin escorted by royal guards wielding batons. When she arrived to the camp, monkeys scrambled for her glimpse, but they were kept away by the guards wielding batons over them. Seeing this, Ram asked Vibhishan, "Let all monkeys get full view of their mother. She should come walking to me."

Getting down the palanquin, Sita moved slowly on her foot towards Ram. While she was coming close to him, Ram made several allegations on her which she couldn't bear, and asked Lakshman to arrange fire for her test. Sensing the consent of Ram, Lakshman collected woods and put them on fire. Sita coming close to the fire, offered her prayer to Brahmins and gods and spoke, "O, Fire god! If I have maintained my chastity, protect me." Saying thus, she entered the fire.

When Sita entered the fire, the gods and *siddha* expressed their anxiety, "Ram knew everything, still he put her to such a tough test."

6-13 Sita sanctified (60 / 881)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

While Sita entered fire, *Indr*, *Varun*, *Yam*, *Kuber*, *Brahma*, *Mahadev* and others had gathered in the sky. They offered sincerer prayer to Ram, "You are whole and sole of the entire creation. Gods receive honour because of your compassion."

Thereafter, Brahma recited his infinite glory.

Subsequently, fire god appeared holding Sita clad in red clothes and jewels, and offered to Ram, "In *Tapovan* (*Dandak* forest) you had given Sita to my custody, and instead shadow of Sita was placed in the *ashram*. The end of demons has been achieved. The shadow Sita has been accepted back by me. Now accept your original Sita."

Ram gladly welcome Sita, and took her with affection in his lap. Seeing Ram happily sitting with Sita, *Indr* glorified him for his successful mission. Ram asked him to revive the dead monkeys by showering ambrosia. Accordingly, all the monkeys were revived to their life.

Subsequently, Mahadev submitted, "I am coming over to Ayodhya to watch your coronation. In the meanwhile, meet Dasarath who is waiting for you."

Ram and Lakshman paid respects to Dasarath. He embraced them as well as sniffed their head, and glorified them for their rare performances.

When Dasarath left, Vibhishan requested Ram, "We want to be blessed by your grand bath here and with your subsequent decoration in new clothes and jewels." Ram expressed his constraint, "Bharat is passionately waiting for me. In his absence, I can't enjoy the refreshing bath." Instead he advised Vibhishan to treat the monkeys with due honour. Vibhishan, subsequently gave liberally precious gifts and cloths to the monkeys.

Having seen the arrival of *pushpak viman* (aerial chariot) brought by Vibhishan, Ram boarded with Sita and Lakshaman to leave for Lanka. Before leaving he advised Sugriv to go to Kishkindha with all the monkeys, and Vibhishan to protect the interest of the citizens of Lanka. Hearing his valedictory advice, Vibhishan submitted in sweet words, "We want to watch your grand coronation, and after offering our greetings to mother Kauslya we will come back to our respective places." Ram, readily agreed and asked them to board. Sugriv, Hanuman, Vibhishan and all other monkeys immediately occupied their position over *pushpak*.

Finally, *pushpak* left for Ayodhya.

6-14 Bhardwaj and Bharat (100 / 981)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

While *pushpak* moved ahead, Ram continued introducing Sita to various places on way, "Ravan was killed there. Meghanad, and Kumbhakarn met their ends there. That is the view of Lanka situated over *trikoot* mountain. That is the bridge across the sea. That is the *setubandh Rameshwar* installed by me during construction of the bridge. There Vibhishan came to join me."

Seeking permission of Ram, Sugriv landed *pushpak* at Kishkindha and boarded Tara and other women who gave a pleasant company to Sita.

Ram resumed introducing Sita, "That is *rishyamuk mountain* where I met Sugriva. There Vali was killed. There is *panchavati* where demons were killed. There are the hermitages of the sages Agastya and Sutikshan. There is *chitrakoot* where Bharat had met us. There is the *ashram* of Bhardwaj on the bank of *yamuna*. There is sacred river *ganga*, and there lies *saryu* dotted with the pillars of *ygya* performed by the erstwhile kings of *Ikshavaku* dynasty."

Thus wandering, *pushpak* landed at the *ashram* of Bhardwaj; it was **panchami (6-14-15 पंचमी तिथि)**, and the period of fourteen years of exile had ended. Ram and Lakshaman paid respectful greetings to the sage. Ram enquired about the news of Bharat, and Ayodhya. 'Everything is fine,' confirmed the sage to Ram. Thereafter the sage spoke, "Through my meditation I knew about all the incidents from *panchavati* to Lanka. Ram! You are the primordial god, who first created water and stayed recumbent over serpent couch. All the beings find refuge in you, and therefore you are called *Narayan*. Sita is Lakshami, and Lakshaman is *sheshanath*, and you are *Vishnu*. The entire creation is due to you. Magnet gives motion to an inanimate iron, similarly due to your potency *maya* creates the universe. Brahma prayed you to eliminate the atrocities from the earth, and consequently you incarnated as human being in the clan of *Raghu*. For the benefits of common mass, you are going to stay over earth for thousands of years. Those who recite the glory of incarnations are favoured with your devotional affection. I pray you to stay with all your accompanying team tonight at this *ashram*."

Ram consented to his proposal and spent the night there. At the same time he sent Hanuman to Shringverpur to convey Guh about his arrival, and advised him to proceed from there to Bharat for intimating him about my imminent arrival. He also advised Hanuman to narrate the preceding episodes of the forest life from abduction to liberation of Sita.

Taking the form a human, Hanuman set out on his mission through sky route. When Guh learnt about the arrival of Ram, Sita and Lakshaman he got overjoyed. From there, Hanuman proceeded to Ayodhya, and found Bharat worshipping the footwear of Ram at Nandigarm, about two miles from Ayodhya. Bharat was in an ascetic garb and his mind was engaged over Ram. When Hanuman offered his respect and broke the news of arrival of Ram; due to pleasant surprise, he got a spell of fit. Recovering soon, he embraced Hanuman, and learnt the details of all the episodes of forest life of Ram.

Bharat gave Hanuman gift of one hundred thousand cows, one hundred villages, and sixteen maiden decorated with precious clothes and jewels. He made a public announcement to gather for warm reception of Ram. Soon the citizens, army and palace queens arrived to accord a warm welcome to Ram. Bharat keeping Ram's footwear over his head moved on foot; he was accompanied by Shatrughn. Soon *pushpak* was seen hovering in the sky as if moon was trying to land over earth.

Seeing *pushpak* coming low, Bharat offered his respect to Ram. Subsequently he spotted Ram, and again bowed to him. When *pushpak* landed, Bharat went overboard, and bowed over the feet of Ram. Ram pulled him in his lap, and thereafter he was greeted by Lakshaman. Thereafter, Bharat uttering his name, bowed to the feet of Sita. He met all other fellow members of the team: Vibhishan, Sugriv, Angad, Jambvan, Maind, Dwivid and others. Shatrughn bowed over the feet of Ram, Lakshaman and Sita. Seeing mothers down, Ram went to offer warm respect to them. He met one by one Kauslaya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra.

Bharat, then offered Ram, the footwear to his holy foot and thus restored the kingdom back to him. He mentioned, "The deposit in the treasury of your kingdom is now tenfold."

Thereafter they boarded *pushpak*. Bharat was drawn in the lap of Ram and *pushpak* moved to Nandigram *ashram*. Getting down there, Ram asked *pushpak* to go back to *Kuber*.

Subsequently, Ram touched the feet of *guru* Vashishath, and giving him a seat, he also occupied another seat.

6-15 Coronation (75 / 1056)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

The coronation ceremony has been observed in three stages:(i) Hair cutting and bathing, (ii) procession from Nandigram to Ayodhya, and (iii) consecration with holy water and crowing.

Royal bathing:

In the supervision of Ram, expert royal barbers first dressed the hair of Bharat from ascetic style to princely style. He was bathed with fragrant water and dressed in new precious cloths, jewels, and sandal pastes. Following him, Lakshaman, Sugriv and Vibhishan were given beautiful hair cut and bathing, and subsequent dressing up in royal style. Finally, the hair cutting, bathing and dressing up in new royal dress of Ram was completed.

Royal procession:

Shatrughn had, in the mean while, arranged chariots, elephants and horses for the royal procession. Getting ready, Ram mounted a chariot which was being driven by Bharat. Shatrughn held royal umbrella (छत्र) over the head of Ram, Lakshaman held fan, Sugriv and Vibhishan held *chavar* (चंवर). Sita rode palanquin, and she was accompanied by wives of Sugriv and other monkeys in separate palanquins. The monkeys in human form, rode elephants, and some were ahead of the chariot of Ram, and some followed him in the rearguard. Celestial beings (*siddh, charan, gandharv*), gods and sages, presented sweet and mild recitation of his glory amidst celestial musical notes.

When the citizens of Ayodhya learnt about the arrival of the grand procession, they watched from the road sides, roof tops, and windows, showering flowers over him. They were well dressed, and their presence enhanced the grandeur of the royal procession. While moving steadily to the royal palace, Ram continued exchanging smiles with the crowd. When he arrived at the palace, he first went to respect mother Kauslya, and subsequently he met the other two mothers. Ram arranged comfortable stay for Sugriv and others in the palace previously occupied by him.

Consecration and crowning:

As desired by Bharat, Sugriv arranged sacred sea water from four cardinal directions by deputing Hauman, Jambvan, Angad and Sushen. Ram and Sita occupied excellently decorated royal throne, and the consecration was performed using scriptural procedures by Vashishath, Vamadev, Jabali, Gautam, Valmiki, and other sages. Basil and *kush* sanctified the holy and fragrant water pots of the sacred places and rivers. Subsequently the holy water was sprayed over Ram and Sita by the accomplished Brahmins and invitee saints. This was followed by consecration using the combination of auspicious juices of specified herbs. During the celebration, celestial beings continued reciting the glory of Ram.

On his coronation, *Indr* inspired *Vayu* to offer a golden garland to Ram. *Indr* himself present a precious gift of garland made of pearls and gems. Celestial dancers made charming presentation, and Ram happily occupied the throne; Sita sitting on his left, and his left hand continued holding her with affection.

At that time, Mahadev recited the glory to Ram, "You are the creator, protector and destroyer of the entire creation; my greetings to you. To free your devotees from the

influence of delusion, you incarnate in various forms; my greetings to you. The brilliance of sun, moon, fire, and the demonstration of valour, potency of the beings are due to your will and consciousness; my greetings to you. Devotees mediating upon your charming blue hued form attain eternal bliss and eternal abode; my greetings to you.” Eulogizing his attributes in varieties of ways, before concluding Mahadev specially expressed his obligation to Ram, “It is the power of your name that along with Parvati, I stay in Kashi with the sole intention of imparting¹⁸ emancipator *mantr* of ‘Ram’ to the dying individuals.” Finally he concluded, “I solicit you to grant me this boon that if someone either recites this Ramayan, or listens to it, or inscribes it, he may be provided eternal bliss, and your sacred abode.”

Indr submitted, “Due to the boons of Brahma, Ravan had deprived us from our celestial share. With your grace, our share has been restored to us.”

Gods glorified him, “Ravan had deprived us from the share of oblation of the sages. Again due to you, we enjoy the oblations made in our names.”

Pitru (पितृ deity of heritage) mentioned, “Human beings offer the oblations in our favour at Gaya (6-15-66) and other places. Ravan used to grab them; now we will receive as usual. It is all because of you.”

Yaksh spoke, “By force, we were condemned into the service of carrying palanquin of demons. You have liberated us from this menial job.”

Gandharv spoke, “Earlier we enjoyed the recitation of your glory with the music and songs. Ravan had forced us to recite his glory in his court. We have been now liberated to sing your glory. “

Accordingly, other celestial beings *maha nag*, *kinna*, *siddh*, cow, earth, and sages offered their greetings to him expressing their happiness and obligation from liberation from the hold of Ravan.

Amidst showering of flowers, presentation of pleasant songs and dances, celestials and humans alike enjoyed the graceful and auspicious presence of Ram and Sita, constantly being attended by Lakshaman and Hanuman, over the royal throne of Ayodhya.

6-16 Warm send off (49 / 1105)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Subsequent to coronation Ram gave liberal gifts of hundred thousand cows, horses and hundreds of oxen, and three hundred million gold coins to Brahmins. While bidding warm send off to guests he offered a beautiful precious chain to Sugriv. Angad received two precious armlets. Ram had gifted Sita a chain made of brilliant gems and pearls and she wanted to gift that to Hanuman. With this intention, taking that chain in her hand, she

¹⁸ 6-15-62 अहं भवन्नाम गृणन्कृतार्थो । वसामि काश्यामनिशं भवान्या ।। मुमूर्षमाणस्य विमुक्तयेऽहं । दिशामि मन्त्रं तवरामनाम ।।

looked towards Ram seeking his tacit permission. He gave her green signal to gift it to anyone whom she preferred. Subsequently, beckoning Hanuman, she put that chain around his neck. Hanuman was extremely glad, and with folded hands he solicited to Ram, "I am never satisfied with recitation of your name. Bless me to keep enjoying the pleasure of chanting your name constantly." Ram blessed him, "So long as my glory stays over earth, you shall be enjoying the pleasure of chanting my name." Thereafter, Hanuman shedding tears of joy, left for performing penance at the Himalayas (6-16-17).

Similarly, Ram met Guh and offering him several villages and other precious gifts bade farewell blessing him to enjoy the sovereign of his Shringverpur state. Vibhishan, receiving his blessings and precious gifts left for Lanka. Sugriv, Angad and other monkeys, duly honoured by Ram, left for Kishakindha.

When Ram accepted the kingdom, earth got enriched with varieties of natural resources. Flowers were endowed with pleasant fragrance, trees bore abundant fruits, and timely rains helped grow crops. There was no untimely death of younger ones, when the elders survived. The threat of poison of snakes, and attack of plunders and thieves were unheard.

Glory of Adhyatm Ramayan

For the first time, Mahadev had recited this Ramayan to Parvati. He devised '*Ram mantr* (राम मंत्र)' as a spiritual technique to liberate the afflicted individuals. The recitation of coronation section of this Ramayan helps ensure high status and wealth in this world. Those who recite, listen and inscribe the Ramayan from beginning are assured of liberation from the worldly bonds, and secure blessings of fond devotional affection.

Uttar Kand

(9 sarg)

7-1 Heritage of Ravan (61 /61)

Parvati was glad to hear the legend of Ram until his coronation as the king of Ayodhya. She was curious to know about later part of his legend, "How many years did he stay over earth, and how did he depart to eternal abode?"

Mahadev was pleased to hear her queries, and he picked up narrating the legend further.

Once eminent sages Viswamitr, Asit, Kanv, Durvasa, Bhrgu, Angira, Kashyap, Vamdev, Atri, and Agasty accompanied by their disciple sages arrived in *Ayodhya*. Being duly worshipped at the royal palace by Ram, they occupied the respectful seats. Agastya initiated the praise of Ram's incredible performances, "You have made the earth devoid of devil demons. Killing of Ravan, and Kumbhakarn, are welcome, but the elimination of Meghanad is most welcome." Surprisingly, when Ram enquired about the details about Meghanad, Agastya offered to narrate the story of Ravan and his heritage.

'It was *satyug*, when Pulastya (पुलस्त्य) son of Brahma arrived at *Sumeru* mountain to undertake penance. He stayed at the *ashram* of the sage Trunvindu (तृणविन्दु). In course of time, celestial dancers used to visit that place which caused discomfort to Pulastya. One day, he warned them, "Whoever will fall on my sight, shall go pregnant." Thus the celestial dancers refrained from visiting the place. The daughter of the sage Trunvindu, was not aware of this development, so she freely roamed about the hut of Pulastya. When Pulastya happened to glance her movement, she immediately became pregnant, and the symptomatic signs of pregnancy were readily noticed over her body. She came to her father, who by meditation could learn about the whole incident. Coming to Pulastya, he offered his daughter to him for his service. Sage Pulastya also accepted her, and subsequently she gave birth to a male child called Vishrava (विश्रवा).

Later, Vishrava also became an accomplished sage, and he was married to the daughter of Bhardwaj (भरद्वाज). From her, he produced a male child. The child was very religious and by his penance, he pleased *Brahma*. He was made the deity of treasury and wealth and was named as *Kuber*. *Brahma* also gifted him with an aerial chariot called *pushpak*. Mounting *pushpak* he came to meet his father Vishrava, and narrated as to how he had pleased *Brahma*. He also enquired from his father, "*Brahma* blessed me the status of god of wealth and *pushpak*, but he didn't indicate any place for my stay." Vishrava advised him, "*Viswakarma* had created a city amidst sea, and that was occupied by demons. Subsequently afraid of *Vishnu*, demons have deserted that city, and you can take possession of the city for your comfortable stay." As advised, *Kuber* occupied the city, which was called Lanka.

Later, Sumali a notorious demon was wandering with his marriageable and extremely handsome daughter. He noticed the splendour of *Kuber* and impressed by him, he advised his daughter Kaikesi, "Afraid of the character of a demon, it may be difficult to find a suitable match for you. Better you approach Vishrava and adopt him as your husband who may bless you with valorous children."

Kaikesi, as advised by Sumali, came to Vishrava and keeping her gaze down, kept scratching the earth with the nails of her toe. When Vishrava enquired the purpose of her visit, she introduced herself and mentioned, "You may learn about my intention through meditation." Accordingly, Vishrava learnt about her intention and spoke to her, "You have arrived at an inauspicious moment, and therefore you will be blessed with children of demonic nature." When she expressed her anxiety, he assured her that her third son would be a staunch devotee of almighty Ram. In course of time she gave birth to Ravan having ten heads and twenty arms. The second child Kumbhakarn was monstrous by his physical form. Surpanakha, a female child was born after Kumbhakarn. Lastly she gave birth to Vibhishan. Kumbhakarn used to devour the sages alive, and Ravan became notorious for his atrocity for grabbing the possession of others.

Agastya mentioned, "O, Ram! You are almighty but due to the veil of delusion, people fail to visualise your true form. You are omniscient, and on your instruction, I dare narrate the story of Ravan." Ram assured him, "Delusion is my inseparable associate, and one can overcome this through chanting of my legends and glory."

7-2 Consolidation of demons (77 / 138)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

Agastya narrated the story further.

'Once, *Kuber* mounting *pushpak*, visited the place of his father. Attracting the attention of her son Ravan, Kaikesi spoke to him, "See the splendour of your elder brother *Kuber*. You should also attain similar status." Ravan assured her, "Beating all his records, I would be superior to *Kuber*." Thereafter, he went to the region of Gokarn, and undertook tough penance. Ravan offered his heads, one by one, in fire as oblation after every one thousand years. When it was the turn of the tenth head, Brahma appeared and enquired about his wishes. Ignoring the threat from humans, he solicited immortality against *garud*, *yaksh*, *nag*, gods, and *gandharv*. Brahma assured him to be so and mentioned, "You will never die by cutting of your heads." When Brahma returned, Ravan got back all his heads as usual.

Later, when Brahma came to Vibhishan, he solicited life of righteousness and refuge in the lotus feet of the almighty god. Brahma granting him to be so, mentioned, "Although you did not express any specific desire, I grant you immortality."

Lastly, Brahma came to Kumbhakarn and enquired about his wish. Kumbhakarn who had been in penance for ten thousand years, was possessed by *saraswati*¹⁹, and solicited, "After sleep of every six months I should be awake for a day." Brahma granted him to be so. When *saraswati* deserted him, he repented for a peculiar and absurd solicitation he made to Brahma.

Sumali came to know about the achievements of his grandsons; he came with Prahast to congratulate them as well as encourage them to grab Lanka again which was earlier in the possession of demons. He advised Ravan, "In light of boon of Brahma, the threat of *Vishnu* is over, therefore you must claim Lanka from *Kuber*." Initially, Ravan ignored his plea showing respect for elder brother *Kuber*. Later, when Prahast explained him, 'Gods and demons are the sons of Kasyap and they are brothers but they continue enmity among themselves and had always been engaged in fighting. There is nothing wrong in claiming Lanka which was earlier in our possession.'

Ravan was convinced and coming to Lanka, he sent Prahast as a messenger to *Kuber* to convey his claim of the city. Subsequently, *Kuber* was forced out, and Ravan took Lanka in his control. After leaving Lanka, *Kuber* pleased *Shiv*. Getting his permission and the help of *viswakarma*, he settled a new city called *Alakapuri* over *Kailas*.

Ravan married his sister Surpanakha to Vidyujihav, in the heritage of kalkhanj. The architect of demons²⁰ was May (मय), and he married his extremely beautiful daughter Mandodri to Ravan. He also gifted him an infallible *shakti*, a deadly weapon. Similarly, Kumbhakarn was married to Vritrajwala, granddaughter of Variochini, and Vibhishan was married to Sarama (सरमा), daughter of a *gandharv*, Sailush.

In course of time Mandodari gave birth to a male child who produced thunderous sound of a raining cloud, and that caused him to be called Meghanad.

Due to boon of Brahma, Kumbhakarn felt sleepy and Ravan arranged a special place in a large cave for his comfortable sleep. When he was possessed by the spell of sleep, Ravan commenced his mission of atrocities over sages and gods. Upset over his bad deeds, *Kuber* sent a message to Ravan to mend his ways. Instead of listening to his advice, Ravan attacked over *Kuber* and dispossessed him from *pushpak*. Encouraged by his victory, he attacked *yam* and *Indr*. Initially *Indr* took Ravan in his custody, but later, Meghanad captured *Indr*, and released Ravan. *Indr* in fetters was brought to Lanka, and he was released on Brahma's initiatives.

Ravan initiated a combat with Sahasrarjun, but he suffered a defeat and was put in fetters by him. Pulastya got him released from there. Similarly he was humiliated by Vali,

¹⁹ Goddess of learning, was sent by gods to misguide Kumbhakarn, otherwise in awake condition he would have killed innumerable sages for his food.

²⁰ Viswakarma is generally meant celestial architect belonging to gods group. On the other hand, demons have their separate architect (or vishwakarma), and he is May (मय).

a valorous warrior. Vali pressed him in his armpits, and kept wandering over four seas. Lastly he liberated him and Ravan made him his friend. Thus Ravan was, although humiliated a couple of times, but mostly he emerged victorious, and established his sovereignty over the world.

Agastay, thereafter praised the potency of Ram for killing such dreadful demons, i.e., Ravan, and Kumbhakarn. He also praised Lakshaman for eliminating deadly devil Meghanad. He further mentioned to Ram, "You are the initiator of the creation. Brahma has sprouted over a lotus from your navel. Fire is born from your mouth and he is responsible for speech. The deities of quarters, *Lokpal*, are born from your arms. Moon and Sun are your eyes. From your nostrils are born life-force (breathing air), as well as celestial physicians Aswinikumar. Different worlds (*bhuvvarlok* etc.) are generated from your feet, thigh, and knees etc. Four seas are created from your abdomen. *Indr* and *Varun* are created from your chest. *Balkhilya* sages are created from your semen. Your phallus has created *yam*, anus has created death, anger has created three eyed *Mahadev*, bones have created mountains, hair of head has created clouds, body has created herbs, and nails have created animals and lesser beings birds, asses etc. As fat pervades in milk, similarly you pervade among all the beings and creation. Those who are enlightened, they could only realise your real form. Sages who search you in *ved* and scriptures, ultimately take refuge in your louts feet, and attain you through devotional affection."

Out of modesty, Agastya sought pardon from Ram for making unsolicited utterances, if any. He sought grant of boon for constant affection in his all powerful name, and his lotus feet.

7-3 Vali and Sugriv (60 / 198)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

This sarg is in two parts. First part contains the story of the birth of Vali and Sugriv, and the second part has the dialogue between Ravan and the sage Sanatkumar.

Ram wanted to know the details of the birth of Vali and Sugriv. Accordingly, Agastya narrated the story.

'Once, Brahma was sitting alone in meditation in his conference hall which was spread over one hundred *yojan*. Subsequently he had tears of joy and he discarded them over earth. Lo and Behold! His tears produced a mighty monkey called Riksha raj. Brahma advised him to be with him for some time. Later, the monkey while roaming around felt thirsty and went near a pond. Looking at his image in water, he mistook that image as his competitor. He jumped down to prove his potency over him, but he didn't find any one, and jumped out of the water. When he was out of the water, he found himself converted into a beautiful and charming woman. *Indr* happened to pass by that place and having a view of that woman he discharged his semen which passed through the hair of that woman. This produced a monkey called Vali. Just after *Indr*, sun happened to

cross that way and he also getting fascinated by her beauty discharged his semen which produced another monkey called Sugriv. The woman monkey coming to Brahma showed him those two monkeys, and Hanuman was made the protector of the latter monkey Sugriv.

In course of time, woman monkey resumed original form of male monkey Riksha raj. Brahma called an angel and deputed him to take Riskharaj and his two sons to Kishkindha. As advised by Brahma Riksharaj was made the king of Kishkindha, and it was mentioned that the services of those and other monkeys would be utilised when almighty *Narayan* would incarnate as a human being over earth.

Agastya thereafter narrated another story which revealed the cause of Ravan abducting Sita.

Once, Ravan met Sanatkumar. He asked the sage, "Whom do you meditate upon? Who is the most supreme god?" The sage revealed to him, "*Narayan* is the supreme among all the gods. He is not easily noticeable but he is omnipresent. All the sages and gods make efforts to attain him in their vision."

Ravan then enquired, "What is the consequence of a demon being killed by *Narayan*?" The sage spoke, "If someone is killed by other gods, he is given heaven but on depletion of the auspiciousness of his previous life, he falls down below on earth and joins the cycle of life and birth. To the contrary, if someone is killed by *Narayan*, he attains his eternal abode and never comes back to earth."

Ravan was impressed by his revelation, and he thought of fighting *Narayan*. The sage could sense his intention and advised him to wait for some time, and assured him that he would definitely get an opportunity to encounter *Narayan*.

The sage further revealed, "In *tretayug*, *Narayan* would incarnate as a human being in the dynasty of *Ikshavku*. He will be known as Ram. On the command of his father, he would go to forest with his brother Lakshman and wife Sita. You can find them then only, and for the time being wait devoting your time in his service."

7-4 Sita exiled (63 / 261)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

(This sarg contains further narration by Agastya, return of Agastya and other sages, Sita discloses gods request to Ram, Ram and Sita made strategic planning to leave for eternal abode, spies confirm public criticism of acceptance of Sita from Lanka, Lakshman takes Sita to the hermitage of Valmiki.)

Agastya continued narrating another story as to why Ravan abducted Sita.

Once Ravan happened to meet Narada, and he enquired from the sage, "Do you know any warrior, who can face me?" Narad sent him to *Swetdweep*, mentioning, "The people of this island are devotees of *Vishnu* and they have been there after they were killed

earlier by *Vishnu*.” Ravan immediately arrived in *Swetdweep*, but *pushpak* stopped on the boarder of the island. Ravan could understand the significance of the place, and he moved inside the island on foot. As soon as he entered the habitation zone, he saw a few women who enquired his purpose of visiting the island. When those women held Ravan, he could release himself from them with great difficulty. He immediately left the island fully satisfied about the significance of consequence of death from the hand of *Vishnu*. That caused him to abduct Sita, and he kept her in Lanka quite protected like mother. His sole intention was to attain liberation, if he was killed by Ram.

Concluding the story, Agastya sought Ram’s permission to leave. All the sages left Ayodhya with great satisfaction and happiness.

Ram was once enjoying the pleasure of the royal garden accompanied by Sita. Finding appropriate time, Sita spoke to him, “Gods have approached me to remind you to leave the earth and move to *vaikunth*. They miss your presence in the celestial world. Since I am here, you can’t leave the earth. They advised me to first leave for eternal abode.”

Responding over the message of gods he planned course of action with Sita, “On the pretext of public criticism I would discard you. You are pregnant, and you will be sent to the *ashram* of Valmiki. There you will give birth to two sons. Thereafter you will again come back to me, but to prove your chastity you will ask the earth a safe place. Accordingly the earth will split, and entering through the earth you will reach *vaikunth*. I would thereafter follow you.”

After this conversation, Sita left the royal garden and entered the palace. Ram continued in his palace meeting the people. He enquired from Vijay, a royal spy, as to what was the peoples’ impression about Sita and Kaikeyi. Ram was told, “Some people condemn the acceptance of Sita after her long stay in Lanka. They are of the impression that this incident has made their wives also wilful.” Later, Ram enquired someone else, and he also confirmed the same impression intimated earlier by Vijay.

Next morning, Ram asked Lakshaman to take Sita and leave her at the *ashram* of Valmiki. He mentioned, “On public criticism, I now discard her.” Further he warned Lakshaman, “If you protest or raise any doubt about my command, I will take as if you are attempting to kill me.”

Lakshaman asked Sumantr to bring the chariot, and getting Sita aboard, he left for the *ashram* of Valmiki. Arriving near the *ashram*, he advised Sita to leave the chariot as Ram had discarded her. As advised, she got down, and Lakshaman left for Ayodhya.

Later, Sita felt sorrowful, and began wailing loudly. Hearing the cry of a woman, the disciples of Valmiki conveyed him about her. Valmiki learnt through meditation that the wailing woman was Sita. He immediately asked the wives of the sages to take Sita inside the *ashram* and disclosed to them about her real identity. Those *ashram* women kept Sita with great care by offering regular worship to her.

After deserting Sita, Ram also adopted a life style of a sage and at the same time continued responding to the royal duties.

7-5 Ram Geeta (62 / 223)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

After Sita left Ayodhya, Ram attended the duties of state like a sage in a detached state of mind, and therefore he looked more like a royal sage. Lakhaman, subsequently enquired from him, "I am the devotee of your lotus feet and the entire world is interwoven with you only. Enlighten me on the technique of successfully crossing the world, i.e., lead to salvation and attain you. "

Ram quoting several scriptural statements, 'tatvamasi (तत् त्वम्ऽसि)', and 'soaham (सोऽहं)' tried to bring home the insight for understanding one's own self. He cautioned, "There are a few sections of people who believe in attaining knowledge only, and through that they claim to attain salvation discarding all sorts of deeds. This is not proper. Deeds could be of two categories righteous and unrighteous. When the deeds are done getting attached to the body, this leads to the cycle of birth and death. To comprehend the presence of almighty, one need to practice taking refuge in my foot and accept all happenings taking place in my direction. There is no other doer. An individual has a false assumption that he is a doer. This will be done away with, once he surrenders in my refuge through devotional affection. Such practice generates love in the heart of a given self for other beings and selves, and this is how he can attain me and have my vision."

7-6 Lav and Kush (56 / 279)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

(This sarg is devoted to establishment of Mathura, and advent of Lav and Kush)

Once, the sages from the bank of *Yamuna* arrived to Ayodhya. The sage Chayavan had lead them to Ram. Ram extended warm reception to them and enquired, "Is there anything due for me to serve you?" The sage Chayavan narrated the atrocity of a demon called Lavan, and he wanted early elimination of the demon.

'In *satyug*, Madhu was a great righteous demon who had pleased Shiv and obtained from him a potential trident. The trident was capable of burning his adversary to ashes and subsequently returning back to his possession. It is learnt he was married to Kumbhinasi, younger sister of Ravan. She gave him a son called Lavan. This demon is a great rogue and day by day he is reducing the strength of the sages. He devours them alive and thus he has become a terror.'

Ram assured the sage for early elimination of the demon. He enquired from his brothers as to who would kill Lavan. When Bharat offered his services, Shatrughn submitted to Ram, "Lakshaman has already served you enough, and Bharat has also taken long penance in Nandigram. This opportunity should be my term of service."

Ram agreed and advised him how to kill the devil. He mentioned, "In the morning, the demon worships the trident, and leaves it back at home, while he goes out for collection of his food. You need to take position at the gate of his palace to prevent his entry when he comes back after hunting. You will be able to kill him only during that period so long he is without trident."

Before sending Shatrughn, Ram crowned him as the king of the state of Lavan, Madhuvan. Thereafter, he sent Shatrughn gifting him an infallible shaft to kill the demon. Shatrughn successfully killed the demon, and rehabilitated the desolated city of Mathura. He was supported by five thousand horses, two and a half thousand chariots, six hundred elephants and thirty thousand infantry from Ayodhya.

On the other hand, Sita gave birth to two male children. The elder was named Kush, and younger was named Lav. The sage Valmiki reared them in his perfect guidance and in course of time, imparted them all sorts of scriptural knowledge after they were invested with sacred thread. They were given special training to sing the hymns of Ramayan. While moving around in forest both the brothers used to present the song of Ramayan. The sages were captivated by listening to the presentation of Ramayan song which they hadn't heard earlier.

Ram continued his auspicious reign of the state spread over the entire earth surrounded by seven seas. He performed *aswamedh ygya* where a gold statue of Sita was placed on his left side. In this *ygya*, Valmiki also arrived with Lav and Kush as an invitee. He occupied an assigned guest hut at the venue of the *ygya*. Once, when Valmiki had risen from the meditation, Kush enquired from him in sweet words, "What causes the bond of worldly life and how can one get rid of it?"

Valmiki enlightened Kush, "The body has an automatic attachment to *ahankar* (consciousness of body). There are three categories of *ahankar*²¹ : *satv*, *raj* and *tam*. With *satv* one attains the life of a sage and righteousness. *Raj* causes the life of a household with wife and children. *Tam* is responsible for getting life of a lesser being i.e., insects, birds, animals etc. It is evident *ahankar* is the bond of the worldly life. Therefore one has to take a resolve of disowning *ahankar*, and the day he is devoid of any type of *ahankar*, he is able to cut asunder the worldly bond.

7-7 Ultimate departure of Sita (84 / 363)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

*(This *sarg* is devoted to the legend of recital of Ramayan by Lav and Kush, departure of Sita to mother earth, and Ram enlightened Kauslya)*

The sage Valmiki advised both the brothers to roam around in the streets, orchards and *ygya* place reciting the song of Ramayan. He also advised not to accept any gift from

²¹ This means body centric concept and hence immensely attached to body and mind.

Ram in case he did so. When Ram learnt about the presentation of Lav and Kush, he invited both the brothers during break period of *ygya*. A great gathering of Brahmins, citizens and invitees took place where Lav and Kush presented the song of Ramayan. Both the brothers resembled exactly like Ram except that they were in ascetic robe and Ram was in royal dress. Impressed by their presentation Ram asked Bharat to gift each of them ten thousand gold coins. They didn't accept the gift and mentioned, "For those who sustain their life on roots and fruits what purpose the gold coins will serve!"

Thereafter Ram sent a message to Sita to come with Valmiki and confirm before the gathering about her purity and chastity. Accepting his command, Sita accompanied Valmiki who came leading her to the venue. While following Valmiki, Sita came confining her sight to the ground. Coming to the venue, Valmiki mentioned to Ram, "I am tenth son of *pracheta*, and I have never resorted to making a false statement. I confirm that Sita is pure, and Lav and Kush are your sons from her. I have performed penance for innumerable years. If I lied, my penance would go futile."

Responding to Valmiki, Ram spoke, "I fully honour your statement. In Lanka also she had passed the test through the fire. Again getting public criticism, I deserted her. Now let Sita herself swear before the public about her chastity."

Accordingly Sita announced before the gathering, "I am pure and chaste, and haven't looked to any person other than Ram; if it is true let goddess earth provide space to me." Lo and behold! Honouring her swear, a throne appeared from the earth, and mother earth embraced Sita in her laps. Thereafter the throne holding Sita went down deep into the earth."

It was really a stunning development; inspired by the scene, some took to meditation, while others felt uncomfortable because of ultimate departure of Sita. Some fell unconscious, but gods lead by Brahma from sky welcomed the happening and praised Ram and Sita. When Ram expressed his grief of separation from Sita, others consoled him.

Subsequently Ram went to his palace accompanied by Lav and Kush where he mostly spent a lonely life. Once mother Kauslya came to him and spoke, "I understand you are almighty *Narayan*. Still I have worldly attachment with you. Enlighten me to the real knowledge."

In response to her query Ram mentioned, "There are three techniques of attaining me: *karm yog* (कर्म योग), *gyan yog* (ज्ञान योग) and *bhakti yog* (भक्ति योग). The last one is useful and risk free. Those who are *tamas bhakt* (तामस भक्त), they always suffer from greed, ego and anger. Those who expect wealth and status are *rajas bhakt* (राजस भक्त). Those who have intimate affection to me and my attributes without any expectation are *satvic bhakt* (सत्त्विक भक्त). Such devotees attain the liberation as the river *ganga* joins the sea. He attains either of *salokya* (सालोक्य), *samipya* (समीप्य), *sarshti* (सर्ष्टि), and *sayujya* (सायुज्य). Coming to *gyan yog*, one has to strive to see me in all the beings. If he enjoys my vision in all the beings he attains me. To understand it, take an instance. Fragrance is carried from one

place to another by air. When it enters the nostrils fragrance remains there and air is free from the fragrance. Similarly, the consciousness engrossed in meditation, enters the soul discarding the sense of body, as fragrance enters the nostril discarding the air. This is how one has to practice and attain me subsequently. ”

Thus enlightened by Ram, Kausalya practiced for some time, and later left for the eternal abode. Subsequently Kaikeyi and Sumitra also quit their mortal remains and joined their husband Dasarath.

7-8 Reminder to Ram (72 / 435)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

(This *sarg* is devoted to the legend of crowning of two sons of Bharat, and two sons of Lakshaman as kings of separate states, arrival of *kal* (the time keeper), Ram discarded Lakshaman, and ultimate departure of Lakshaman)

In course of time, Bharat received a call from his maternal uncle Yudhajeet. With the permission of Ram, he visited the place and established two separate states. One was Puskaravati and other was Takshashila. He crowned his two sons kings of those states, former to Pushkar, and the latter to Taksh. Thereafter he came back to Ayodhya.

Once, Ram advised Lakshaman to win the devil tribal of the west and crown his two sons as the kings of those places. Lakshaman accordingly taking army from Ayodhya won the tribal people and anointed his sons Angad and Chitraketu as kings of two states. Thereafter he came back to Ayodhya.

With the passage of time, one day a sage appeared at the palace and requested Lakshaman to intimate Ram that the disciple of the sage Atibal had come to see him. On the consent of Ram, the sage was taken in with due honour. Ram greeted him and enquired his intention of visit. The sage spoke, “I have important message and I can divulge it to you only. Nobody shall either hear, or be present during our conversation. If this is violated, you need to kill the transgressor.” Ram assured him to be so, and cautioned Lakshaman, “Don’t allow anybody inside here, so long as I am in meeting with the sage, otherwise I would penalise the violator with the penalty of death.”

The sage spoke to Ram, “ I have been sent by Brahma. I am your eldest son *kal* born from your potency of *maya*. Next to me was born Sheshnag who gave you support to sleep over water surface. Later Brahma was created over lotus from your navel. Subsequently when you killed two demons Madhu and Kaitabh, the earth was created from bones and relic of their bodies. To emancipate the gods you incarnated as *Vaman*, and later you dawned over earth for a period of eleven thousand years to eliminate Ravan. The period is now over, still if you wish to stay you may do that otherwise you may plan your departure to your abode of *Vishnu lok*.”

Ram responded positively to *kal* and confirmed his departure back to the eternal abode.

On the other hand, Lakshaman faced a tough time, with the arrival of Durvasa. The sage wanted to see Ram immediately. When Lakshaman wanted to persuade him and fulfil his desire for Ram was in secret meeting with some another sage, he burst to the brim and threatened Lakshaman, "I will curse you and your lineage to complete destruction." Instead of destroying the entire Ikshavaku house, Lakshaman preferred his own destruction and violating Ram's command, he intimidated him about the arrival of Durvasa. Sending off *kal*, Ram came to meet Durvasa who asked him, "I have completed one thousand years of fast and therefore arrange my food immediately." Ram met the sage's demand, and after satisfying with cooked food, bade him warm send off.

After the sage Durvasa left, Ram recalled his command to Lakshaman when *Kal* was with him. He was in deep agony of dilemma, that Lakshaman came to him and requested him to adhere to his vow. Ram was not able to decide and he sent for the royal court and sought the advice of *guru* Vashishath. The advice of the *guru* was to discard Lakshaman, for killing and discarding were similar in nature.

When Ram discarded Lakshaman, he went to the bank of *Saryu*. Taking water from the holy river in his hands, he sat over deep mediation controlling all the nine senses and pulled the life force in the highest place upper domain, i.e., to the head top (*brahm randhr ब्रह्म रंध्र*). While he concentrated his consciousness to the abode of Vasudev, sages and gods showered flower over him. In the meanwhile, *Indr* arrived, and keeping himself invisible took Lakshaman bodily to the eternal abode. In *Vaikunth*, Lakshaman was given warm reception for one fourth of the potency of *Vishnu* was back from the terrestrial world.

7-9 Ultimate departure (73 / 508)

Mahadev continued narrating the legend to Parvati.

(This *sarg* is devoted to the legend of crowning of two sons of Ram and Shatrughn as kings of separate states, and ultimate departure of Ram, Bharat, Shatrughn, and the citizens)

On the departure of Lakshaman, Ram expressed his determination to follow him after coronating Bharat as the king of Ayodhya. Bharat didn't agree to his proposal, and he also wanted to accompany him. He advised, "Kush to be coronated as the king of Ayodhya, and Lav could be coronated the king of the northern region. Let the message of all the developments be sent to Shatrughn also."

When the citizens learnt about the determination of Ram, they prostrated in front of the palace. On the initiative of Vashishath, when Ram enquired from them, they demonstrated their firm resolve to accompany him in his departure. Assessing their firmness, he agreed to them to take them along with himself.

Kush and Lav were coronated for their respective kingdoms, and they departed with heavy heart to their capitals. Each of them were accompanied by eight thousand chariot, one thousand elephants, sixty thousand horses and lots of gems, pearls, gold and precious clothes.

When a messenger arriving at Mathura, conveyed the details of happenings at Ayodhya, Shatrughn crowned his two sons as the kings; Subahu was given Mathura, and Yupketu was given Vidisha. Thereafter, anxious Shatrughn, moved fast to *Ayodhya*.

Arriving at Ayodhya, he prostrated to Ram and spoke, "I have crowned the two sons as the kings, and I am determined to follow you. Don't leave me alone here." Following the submission of Shatrughn, the monkeys, the bears and the demons also submitted to Ram to allow them to accompany him. Sugriv informed, "I have crowned Angad as the king, and I am free to be with you." Hearing similar resolve of Vibhishan, Ram forbade him, "Swear in my name, and stay until end of the earth." He also advised Hanuman, "As granted earlier, you stay on the earth enjoying chanting of my legends and glory." Coming to Jambvan, he mentioned, "Stay until the end of *Dwapar*. You will enter into a combat with me. Only after that you will be free." To all other monkeys and bears he permitted them to depart with him.

Next morning, Vashishath arranged the oblation fire (*agni hotr* अग्नि होत्र) to lead Ram, and all his weapons accompanied him in human form. *Lakshami* (श्रीदेवी Shri Devi) accompanied him on his left with a white lotus in her hand. Holding a red lotus, on his right was *bhu devi* (भूदेवी). He was surrounded by *pranav* (प्रणव, ॐकार स्वरूप), *gayatri* (गायत्री), divine sages, and *ved* (वेद), all in human form. The citizens with their sons and wives, Bharat, Shatrughn and other lesser beings (birds and animals) followed him to depart with him.

When Ram came out away from Ayodhya, his glance fell on the river (*saryu*) generated from the eye of *Vishnu*, and he felt great happiness. At the same time, sky was full of gods, sages, and *siddha*. Celestial drums and music rented the sky while Ram performed *achamaniyam* (sipping holy water आचमनीयम्), and rotated complete round (प्रदक्षिणा) over his feet to honour the river *saryu*.

Subsequently Brahma submitted to him, "O, Lord! You are cordially welcome to your eternal abode. You may enter your *Vishnu* form, or any other form which you may prefer." Lo and behold! Not noticed by anybody, Ram got equipped with four hands with his divine insignia. *Shesh* provided him cover and couch. Accordingly he advised Brahma, "Everybody following me is very righteous and they should be provided abode similar to *vaikuntha*." Brahma assured them to be sent to *santanik lok* near his own abode. Sugriv was from the part of sun, so he entered the sun. Subsequently, all the citizens and animals touched the holy water and transformed into celestial brilliant forms. Those who had come to watch the great event, they also joined them, and arrived in divine abode. This is how the ultimate departure took place.

Glory: The sacred legend was initially narrated by Mahadev to Parvati. Those who recite it daily attain close proximity to Sri Sita Ram. The auspicious benefits gain eternity to the one who either recites it, or listens to it, or inscribes it.

Srimann Narayan Charnau Sharnam Prapaddy. (श्रीमन्नारायण चरणौ शरणम् प्रपदे)